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大熊猫介 (トラノヲ)
Illustration

全世界武芸大会(上)

Hundred World Martial Arts Tournament

7

[Hundred]

GA文庫

Hundred

vol.7

by Jun Misaki

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フリッツ・グランツ

レイティアの幼なじみ。
軽い。

如月ハヤト

本作品の主人公。
歴代一位のハンドレッド
反応数値を誇る。

クレア・ハーヴェイ

リドルガーデンを束ねる
生徒会長。

レイティア・サンデミリオン

武芸家一年。
リベリア合衆国出身。

エミリア・ハーミット

ハヤトの同級生。その正体は
グーデンブルグ王国のお姫様

剣崎トウカ

ハヤトの師匠である
リュウセイの姪。

HUNDRED

ゲルト・アブラモビッチ

ラスィーヤチームの一員。
階級は中尉。

ツェザーリ・トウイニャーノフ

武芸大会に参加するラスィーヤ
チームのリーダー。
階級は少佐。

如月カレン

ハヤトの妹。
遂にアイドルとして
デビューを果たす。

霧島サクラ

世界的な人気を誇る歌姫。

エレナ・スカルニコア

ラスィーヤチームの紅一点。
階級は大尉。







瞬間、すぐにハヤトの顔からは血の気が引いていった。
トウカや雪梅たノアたち個人戦に参加するメンバーの
女子全員が着替中だったからだ。



「望むところだ、
リトルガーデンの武芸者共よ」
スレイヤー



Prologue

The night of the day when it was decided to hold the < <World Martial Arts Tournament> >.

It is after the dinner party held by the members who participated in the assembly of *Sereson* and so, the members who heard that.

– Unexpectedly Romalia’s Pope-sama, will cooperate with me to that extent.

In a living room at a villa in Geneva, Judal Harvey, president of Warslan Company, dressed in a bathrobe, muttered while tilting the glass on which red wine was poured.

[Even if in that plot of land there’s a country like the *Vatican*, it sure is narrow and cramped in there, don’t you agree? They sure don’t mind seeking a new world* on the moon]

***TN: It’s written with the kanji 天地 which may be: “realm, sphere, world, top and bottom, heaven and earth”**

It is the voice of a woman that answered Judal’s muttering. It comes from the speaker of the PDA placed on the table. Stereoscopic images were projected on the screen. The figure of a woman, with a red long hair and wearing a white coat.

It is Vitaly Tynyanov.

The former girlfriend of Judal and former technician of Warslan. She is also the terrorist who assaulted Little Garden.

– It would be nice if it they have such a simple ambition.

After having released his mouth from the wine glass, Judal replied smiling with a puff. Perhaps, it was an attitude similar of being a provocation. Vitaly lifts her eyebrows.

[If that’s the case, then what kind of ambition do you think the

Pope of Romalia has? I guess that the Messiah is not going to revive, even in the moon]

– Unfortunately, I don't know about that. However, it is better to be vigilant. She doesn't seem to be doing things ordinarily, and also she is a prophet. She may have **saw** something.

[I don't believe in God occult things such as prophecies, but I can hardly imagine that you believe in them]

– It is true, just like you say. Nevertheless, there are facts that the predictions are actually going on. They aren't tricks nor vague words, there are several events rising which are indeed real.

[However, it isn't infallible, but it doesn't mean that it's random either. Nonetheless, its chances are high, and all things that influence the survival of human beings, it's realizing them all]

– Mainly related to Savage.

[If there is something that can be guessed now, is it that somehow she is causing the invasion of the Savage? But I wonder if we are overthinking it?]

Judal heard those words, and laughed loudly.

– Hahaha, you really are a scientist. I try to give unscientific reasons. Coming out with such things, only God himself can do them, don't you agree?

[Getting closer to God□ On the contrary, defeating God is kind of a goal for a scientist]

– Which reminds me, I remember my mother was saying something similar.

Once again, Judal put a glass of wine in his mouth. Because of that, the contents of the glass became empty, but the cheese remained on the dish already placed on the table. The contents of the opened wine remained as well. Then, he pours wine again into the glass.

[Although to end the conversation, is Warslan able to achieve a complete victory at the National Martial Arts Tournament?]

– Well, I wonder about that.

Putting an empty bottle on the desk, Judal answered with his hands facing the sky as if he was playing the fool.

– I don't know until we try it, but winning may not be possible.

[It is quite a faint-hearted utterance, even though I suggested it, as a matter of course, to begin to talk about holding the tournament. Even if you have a normal sedan type car knowing you can buy one at a price you can afford, you boasted to me and opened the seal]

– I'm just telling the facts. But, you and I are thinking the same, right? Still, < <LiZA> > surely should make a similar judgment. Little Garden is putting strength beyond than what I thought. With the ability of the *top class* Slayers, it should be above Warslan at the moment.

[In other words, the possibility of the championship going to Little Garden is high?]

– Well, that's how it is.

[Even so, you aren't viewing it as a problem, that your younger sister, Claire Harvey, is given the command of the independent organization Little Garden which, in the end, is a group company of Warslan. Or is it because is in your hands that Little Garden will win and advance to the next rounds in team competitions so that it won't be a problem for them to be the central organization of the moon project?]

– If adults with power are mixed there, there is a possibility of causing a rebellion with that power, but children alone will not be able to do so. Even if they raise a rebellion, children have shallow thinking, after all. I have known how much power I have. Besides, there is also a hostage called Liza. Even Charlotte is not one of the type that does something that becomes an obstacle to her own

research.

[She is the same scientist as me— no, more scientist than me]

– That’s how it is.

The sound that the door opens, and Judal spilt a broadly grinning smile. Then, a voice sounded in the living room. That voice is from a girl, the bodyguard of Judal. Neveah Grauss. She is trembling, her eyes are wide open and is wearing only shorts.

– Judal-sama, what in the world is **that**?

That is of course a stereoscopic image of Vitaly projected on the PDA placed on the table.

– Oh my, it seems like she discovered us.

Judal replied, acting innocently.

Neveah asked again to Judal as if she was frightened, seeming to be confused.

– Judal-sama, why is that woman alive? That woman, she is Judal-sama’s...

[You are correct, Neveah Grauss]

It was Vitaly, not Judal, who answered.

Until now it was a feminine tone but, changes completely— it becomes a masculine tone and keeps on with the word as it is.

[That man, to my heart— a gunshot by Judal Harvey stopped its movement. Nevertheless, the brain was alive. Judal tried to use that brain of mine once again— an extraordinary excellent brain—]

Judal who heard such Vitaly’s confession, laughs loosening his mouth in a weird shape like a crescent moon, and added one thing to another to supplement it.

– After all, it’s just a bowl of flesh and the like. After I shot Vitaly,

I mobilized all the trustworthy medical and technical staff, took her brain out and tried to keep it in a capsule to connect it with < <LiZA> > .

[As a result, my brain was connected to < <LiZA> > in the basement of Little Garden. Packed with speech, I became like a computer that operates with Liza's *energy*, who's Judal's sister]

– No way, such a thing...

– It is possible with the current Warslan's technology. The chances of success was not 100%, and it also used the research results of my mother Linis.

– In short that is, do you mean that maid type android?

– Exactly.

Judal nods.

[It's really like harassment. It's because you shot me to death, then you revive me, to make me work in prison. Do you know how much effort I have to do? It's also very sad as a woman, because I can't feel pleasure by doing body contact with the man that I love]

– Hahaha, if you want, would you like Charlotte to program it to receive the same stimulus?

[Please stop joking. Even if I'm given the same stimulus, it will not be the same]

– That is, are those words meaning that I don't think as a scientist?

[Those words of now are as a woman]

– ...then, let me say this. At that time, no matter if I was shot or you weren't shot, we probably couldn't return to such a close relationship in this way. In other words, if you as a woman, I wonder if now you are satisfied?

[Certainly, there may be such a point]

Vitaly smiles a little delightfully and continued.

[—Well, here is a question to Neveah Grauss. Would you like to be used like this even after you were cast aside and killed by Judal?]

– What do you mean?

[Even in this shape, you'll look forward to be by the side of Judal. I suppose you are aware that you will not truly be loved by Judal, even if you embrace him many times, right? Besides, you know too much. After separating, it's not going to be the same—]

The expression of Neveah who heard the words of Vitaly changes to a terrible one.

– Keep quiet, Vitaly!

[It seems like I ended up provoking him. It has been a while since I talked to other than Judal, so it seems my chitchat crossed the line a bit. In which case, let's assume the third wheel disappears. A woman's jealousy is unsightly. A pair of women fighting each other that are being seen by the man they love, that's not something that I wish for]

At the same moment of those words, the figure of Vitaly displayed on the PDA disappeared.

– Neveah.

– Yes...

Judal got up from the chair and put his hands on the cheeks of Neveah who was staring at the place where Vitaly was in a steep look, and kissed her as it was.

– If you don't like it, you can leave from my place at any time. Vitaly said that, but I will not cause any harm to you when you are about to leave.

– ...no, I will never leave you. I will not betray you either. That is a testimony of my love to you, the resistance's—.

Neveah kisses Judal as if to return the favor. Then tangled their tongues, and pushed Judal's body to the sofa.

Chapter 1: Campus Martial Arts Tournament / Projection / New Year's Eve

It's the top of November where autumn is also intensifying.

< < Campus Martial Arts Competition > > was approaching.

A little more than a month after the *Third Attack*, Little Garden leaves the city of Sangria where restoration is progressing, so it sails over the Pacific Ocean. The casual daily life came back after near 2 months since the school festival [Gardens Festa].

...nonetheless, the next event was immediately here.

Autumn's < < Campus Martial Arts Competition > > .

Spring and autumn competitions are originally included in Little Garden's annual schedule, which have been held every year since its foundation. But this year the meaning that carries the competition is changing.

Because the < < World Martial Arts Tournament > > will be held at the beginning of the year, that is, from mid-January. To participate in it, a strong request came from the United Nations and Warslan HQ, to which the representative of Little Garden, Claire Harvey, accepted. The only thing is that she is not interested in the Project Lunaltia. However, Claire inferred that Judal Harvey, President of Warslan, his older brother, may use Liza, their sister, on the lunar project. It is obvious that the *sample* of the residential facility to be built in the moon is this Little Garden.

If Warslan takes the initiative in the Moon's development plan, the disposal of Little Garden is—— there is a high possibility of

using Liza's *energy* to power the residential facility of the moon. If Claire is against that, she should definitely enforce it. The reasons are not that clear but, Claire knows that Judal is raising the temperature in regards to the moon project.

For that purpose, he created an artificial island along the coast of the *Sunshine State* district where the space station's profitability is not taken into consideration. It's about constructing a facility to use in the <<World Martial Arts Tournament>>. In the future it's planned to be a harbor for heading to the moon.

As for the person who is the main technologist of Little Garden, and the supervisor of <<LiZA>>, named Charlotte, she will also be on Judal's side regarding the project of the moon. For her past achievements and skills, those shouldn't be posing for effect. If there are more things to do by going out to the moon, she would like to head there. In brief, there's no one on her side.

That's why——

If the situation happens as expected, Claire will board the moon, intending to keep Liza protected by her side.

That's why they must win the <<World Martial Arts Tournament>> and increase the right to speak of Little Garden.

In addition, it is settled that the <<World Martial Arts Tournament>> consists of two parts, an individual category and a group category.

The individual category is to be held in advance with the opening of the tournament, it's only a place to appeal *free Slayers* who wants to belong to some country or organization to the end and those who learn by observation, and the battle over who will have the hegemony of the Project Lunaltia is wagered to the group category that will be held after the individual category ends.

Up to 10 groups can enter into it. Despite the luck on the prospect of <<LiZA>>'s guess, the result of the <<Campus Martial Arts Competition>> in autumn has resulted in the selection of representative members of Little Garden. Originally it

was decided that only the students of high school martial arts department could participate in the <<Campus Martial Arts Competition>>. However, the <<World Martial Arts Tournament>> is supposed to be participated by anyone over 13 years old.

Therefore, the limits for this time, the regulation was changed so that middle school students can participate in <<Campus Martial Arts Competition>> if they have qualities as a Slayer.

For that reason Touka can also participate in autumn's <<Campus Martial Arts Competition>>. Krovahn and Nakri are also participating.

After receiving explanations about the upcoming tournaments in the classroom, Ryu Shuemei, a classmate of Hayato, muttered her growing deep emotions.

– The moon, I would like to go there...

– But, your true strength is grave.

Without a moment's delay, Noah inserts a tsukkomi.

Noah is also a classmate of Hayato and the others, just like Shuemei.

At any rate, in order to be sent to the base of Lunaltia that is in the moon, the first condition is to come in top of the <<Campus Martial Arts Competition>> and participate in the <<World Martial Arts Tournament>>.

Next, the team to which you belong must get to the top of the <<World Martial Arts Tournament>>——

Moreover, it must also be a member of *Selections* that have be dispatched to the moon.

– Are you sure that only ten people are sent to the <<World Martial Arts Tournament>>?

– Yeah, it is.

Noah nods to Shuemei's doubt.

– If so, the President and the Vice-Presidents are confirmed, Emilia-san, Leitia-san, and Kisaragi-san who have top class skills among the members of *Selections*, Fritz-san—— and we can agree on those three who are transfer students——.

It is rumored that those three, Nesat, Krovahn and Nakri have the same power as Hayato.

The leading figures are the ones who dealt with the Savage even in the sea during the *Third Attack*.

– Certainly that's the vibe I get.

Going along with the reasonable, then you'll agree with what Shuemei says. Noah thought so, and most of the others calculated the same. The prediction of < <LiZA> > and the prediction of Claire were the same as that.

Thus, in the middle of November. Autumn's < <Campus Martial Art Competition> > has been started. The period is one week.

They have already entered the second half of the battle and today is the fifth day.

It's the day that two matches of semifinals will be held.

The first match card is [Emilia Hermit vs Nesat Olfred].

Emilia who is a user of the *Hundred Arms Shroud* can change its form freely, and then is Nesat. Behind her eye patch lies the eye with which she can duplicate the Hundred, the < <The Eye of Truth> > *Truth Eye*.

Their fight was getting more attention than the other second match of the semifinals, [Claire Harvey vs Liddy Steinberg].

By the way, Hayato was defeated by Liddy in the quarterfinals.

– As always, you'll not be able to fully demonstrate your power in this competition, huh?

Those are the words that Liddy said to Hayato after the match. Unless it's a battle to protect his life or anyone else, he can't fully demonstrate his strength. It could be said that it's a weakness of Hayato.

Nevertheless, having entered the best 8 is a thing to value, as Hayato will definitely be a member of the <<World Martial Arts Tournament>>.

Perhaps that's the reason for those words. In the next competition it will be a problem if he doesn't give his best.

Hayato understands so.

(But I'm planning to do it as seriously as I am...)

Of course he can't use the power of the Variant, that's unavoidable as it's an implicit rule. It's imposed on Emilia as well as Krovahn and the others.

By the way, the four members who are in the semifinals and the members of the best 8 other than Hayato are Fritz, Liddy and Krovahn. Erika and Nakri are within the best 16. Touka is there too.

The <<Campus Martial Arts Competition>> is progressing with the development as expected by most people.

...but, this game was different.

There are many voices predicting Emilia's victory in advance, but the result is not so like that. That's because of the use of Nesat's hidden [ability] so far.

Her Hundred—— it was added by Charlotte to compensate the weakness of *Truth Eye*.

—— *Projection*.

That is the name of that ability.

The armament of Emilia at the start of the match was a *Dragoon* type. It manipulates six floating batteries and set off beam attacks.

Naturally Emilia thought that it was going to be a *Dragoon* type match, because of Nesat's <<Duplicate Deployment>> *Trace On*. Hayato and the audience also thought the same. Immediately after the start of the match, it was indeed that kind of development. A gun battle where two girls and twelve floating batteries are disturbed in the air. During that time Emilia dominated. However, Nesat shortened the distance with Emilia and suddenly changed the armament to a large *Twin Sword* like the one Krovahn uses.

(Eh...!?)

Truth Eye of Nesat duplicates the armament she saw. Rather than a melee fight of multiple people versus multiple people, in this place, there is nothing to duplicate other than Emilia's armament. Because she thought so, it's natural that can be a gap in there. Emilia was unable to take a defensive posture against the attack, and received one from a big sword without a barrier, so she was beaten to the field.

If this was the usual, it wouldn't be strange to be settled like this.

However, Nesat didn't think so.

The other party is that Emilia.

Without descending to the ground, she changed the armament to a *Long Shooter* type in the air, let loose a shot towards the inside of the cloud of dust and starts to pursue her.

Now an explosion covered the stadium. The cloud of dust becomes even more intense.

– What's the vital value of Emilia?

Hayato, who was watching the match at the front row of the audience seats, looked at the monitor instinctively.

– She still has some left.

It was Latia that muttered so while looking at the same monitor. The vital value still remains about 30%. There was still around 25% of *energy* value. They don't know if she is aware of that or not.

However, Nesat never loosened the attack technique. Nesat, who has coming down to the ground, changes her weapon to a huge scissor and stands behind Emilia, who is about to rise in the cloud of dust. There, Emilia's body is between the opened blades.

Emilia noticed it and raised her hands, and said.

– Ahaha, it's expected that I should *give up* with this. If this was a real battle, the moment I moved, my body will be split in two.

Thereupon, the buzzer indicating the end of the match reverberates in the arena. Subsequently, Nesat's victory was displayed on the monitor.

– Can't believe that you gave up. You could have done a little bit more from there, right?

Emilia asks to Charlotte who is descending into the battlefield while smiling with a broad grin.

– ...it's because I wanted to ask what's the meaning of that to Charo.

Saying that, Emilia glared at Charlotte.

– The transformation of Nesat's Hundred, what on earth are you planning? So that isn't the same as my *Arms Shroud*?

– In short, giving up was just a quick way for you to ask that, huh? It's possible to say as an answer that it's not evolution, it's just different from your *Arms Shroud*.

– If that's the case, then what is it?

– I brought something that makes easier for *imagination*.

– *Imagination*? What do you mean?

– I added one function to Nesat's prosthetic eye. *Projection*—— that's the name of that ability.

The image she sees is stored in the memory within the eye

prosthesis, that is, the memory of the artificial lens, so it seems that she is able to project it.

– So you mean that if there are pictures and videos of armaments stored in the memory, it's possible to deploy any shape of weapon, right?

– You might say that most of that is true. However, it isn't good to just look at the pictures of a weapon, because if you don't know how to use it, even if a weapon is created as it seems, there's nothing that you can do.

– Yeah, now that you say so.

– That point is the same for your *Arms Shroud*, so you'll understand it well. That's why she wants to fight a lot of Slayers now to remember how to use various weapons. That way, she will surely be a great force. So please, help her too by practicing together with her from now on. For the victory of Little Garden at < < World Martial Arts Tournament > > .

– ...oh, okay. I understand.

While expressing a slight subtle expression, Emilia nodded.

In the second semifinal round Claire wins against Liddy, and in the decisive battle for the third place which took place one day apart, Emilia won against Liddy□□ Having prepared new abilities, Claire won against Nesat and so, the < < Campus Martial Arts Competition > > closed its curtains——.

– Aaaa... third placee...

Lying her back on her bed, Emilia sighed greatly. This is in the prepared bedroom for Emilia in the residence of the main technologist of Little Garden, Charlotte Dimandius. The residence boasts to be one of the prominent and extensive among the ones in Little Garden. It symbolizes somehow the favorable treatment that Charlotte has in Little Garden. But she rarely returns to this mansion. She secludes herself in the laboratory.

Therefore, Emilia is mostly alone in this spacious mansion.

Emilia was used to stay alone. It was because she was always alone when she was confined in Gudenburg.

But now it's different.

She got used to come in contact with many people.

Besides——.

Now, when she is alone, she only thinks about Hayato. Although she often thought of things of the past like the boy who helped her during the *Second Attack*, now emotions different from those times overflow from her heart.

Her heart is choked up with emotion and her whole body shivers, and so her body gets hot. In order to suppress the shivering, Emilia hugged the pillow tightly.

– Hayato no baka*...

***TN: Yeah, she said that! (Stupid Hayato)**

What came to mind when she murmured that, it's the figure of Kenzaki Touka. The *Third Attack* that happened about a month ago——.

After Kisaragi Hayato used the sword of Kenzaki Touka, the one she yearned as her Shinshishō, to defeat the dreadnaught type Savage that invaded the city of Sangria in the United States of Liberia where Little Garden was staying along the pier.

Emilia enquired Hayato about Touka.

What she was told was that Touka was attacked by a wild dog that had eaten a core during the battle with the Savage in Yamato. And then Hayato, about the poison from the wound of her body, he—— it's said that he sucked up the Variant Virus. Although the circumstances are slightly different, he made to another woman the same thing he did to her ten years ago. Feelings of that special event of only two people that was eroded because of another

person, nothing can be done to resolve that.

It's because of that, that her chest was also hurting in a stinging manner.

(But I heard that Kenzaki Touka is not becoming a Variant...)

They don't even kiss to relieve symptoms. Hayato's eyes during the story were not lying. Also, Kenzaki Touka doesn't seem to have anything in sight but swords—— that means, it seems that she doesn't know about [Love] yet.

Therefore, she believes that the possibility that she will become a rival is low, for now.

– Still, this...

It doesn't change the complexity. Hayato is thickheaded, but he is a nice person. There's no mistake in such a thing.

Even if he has to throw away himself, he will be there to save others. Like in the past, like that girl who now has an armament similar to myself—— the enemy, Nesat Olfred, was saved.

...still.

That gentleness, from Hayato, I consider that want it for myself only.

(Really, that's ego, right...? Knowing that Hayato, now more than in the past, I've come to love him more and more...)

With a *hehe*, she noticed that her nature and cheeks are loose.

– All right!

Emilia, who raised her upper body while clapping her cheeks with both hands doing a *PAN* *PAN*, descends from the bed. And then, swore within her heart.

(I'll do my best to not lose to anyone again! Not to the Prez, not to Kenzaki Touka, not to Kirishima Sakura, not even to Nesat

Olfred——)

Two days after the tournament was over.

The members selected for the < <World Martial Arts Tournament> > were announced from the Student Council.

It's as expected in advance, members of the best 8 that includes Claire and Nesat and also Erika and Nakri who are from the best 16 of the tournament. With more than ten people, Little Garden was to fight in team battles of the < <World Martial Arts Tournament> > which will be held earlier next year.

November was about to end. The season will change from autumn to winter. Although outside has become much cooler, the Little Garden's training grounds are not cold even with a Variable Suit, which have a lot of exposure, because the air conditioning is working.

The class in the afternoon is battle training. And it was about to end now.

– Come to think of it, what are you going to do for winter vacation? Are you going back to Yamato like you did in summer vacation?

Fritz calls out to Hayato who was stretching.

Right next to Hayato's back is Emilia, who stood there helping him to stretch and asked him, trying to look into his face.

– ...Hayato, what are you going to do?

– I'd like to do so if possible. What do you plan to do?

– If you are going to return to Yamato, then I'll accompany you too. I'd like to meet everyone in the institution.

– Then, I'll ask to Karen and everyone about it. It's absolutely necessary to tell the schedule to the President soon.

Hayato and everyone who are members of <Special Team> *Selections*, have been told by Claire to promptly inform the schedule for winter vacation.

In that case, immediately after the class have ended.

Hayato changed into his uniform and sent an e-mail to Karen.

[Do you have a moment after this? Where are you now?] He should have go to the hospital when she was hospitalized, but the Karen of now doesn't need to be there.

Karen is now attending to school, and together with Sakura and Touka, she lives in a beautiful *guesthouse*, located along the seaside, at the opposite side of the deck of Little Garden. Maybe she took the chance to go out to *Central* with her friends, but he doesn't know where she is now.

[Now I am at home with Sakura-san and the others. Do you need something?]

In other words, it seems that Touka is also with her.

Hayato sent a mail again while thinking if that was just right.

[Is it fine if I go right now? I have something to talk]

Karen's reply is really fast. The mail arrived in less than a minute.

[It is fine. There is something that I also want to talk with Nii-san, so I will be waiting]

At the same time he sees it, Hayato said to Emilia standing next to him.

– Well then, I'll go to the place of Sakura and Karen for a moment.

– Eh, now? Is Sakura there too?

– Looks like it.

– If so, then I'll go as well.

Emilia said, obviously.

Hayato understands from the experience so far that when Sakura and Emilia face each other, it usually becomes awkward.

However, against Emilia in this state, Hayato will not say something like “Don't follow me” or “I'll go alone”.

In any case if they go back to Yamato, Sakura and Emilia will be together, and together with both Touka and Karen.

It will surely be difficult to be able to avoid it.

Believing that, Hayato started walking towards the *guesthouse*.

The *guesthouse* where Sakura and the other girls live is built a little far from the President's house and from Charlotte's house, which is where Emilia lives.

Hayato walks on foot towards that place along the road paved with concrete, where on both sides of it, beautiful lawn and trees are growing. To the right side, the sea can be seen through the tempered glass. There isn't a single cloud, it's a very nice weather.

He arrives in front of the *guesthouse* which is a little more than ten minutes from the school. There was a girl standing there.

It's Touka.

She is wielding a black sword while wearing a kendo uniform.

– Aah, if it aren't Shinshishō and Emilia-san? Did something happen?

Touka stopped swinging, and called out Hayato and Emilia.

– I need Sakura and Karen for a bit. I have some business to do with Touka too.

– Eh, something with me?

– Actually.

Hayato began to talk about the story of the winter vacation to Touka.

– Ah! It's something like that...? I'll leave it to Shinshishō and the others. I just came here and I don't want to return yet. Rather, training is the priority for the <<World Martial Arts Tournament>>

Saying that, Touka readies her sword.

– Got it, then I'll let you know when it's decided.

– Understood.

Separating from Touka, Hayato stands in front of the gate of the *guesthouse* and rings the chime. Then, Sakura popped out while opening the door with energy and opening both arms wide.

– Hayato-kun, please come... in...

When Sakura sees Emilia standing behind Hayato, she kept speaking while making a wry face, and spits out.

– Why are you coming along!?

– Were you thinking about doing something because I'm accompanying him?

– ...I'm just disappointed when I think that you are involved in what Hayato-kun has to say.... For now, come in. Let's continue the conversation inside.

Of course, it is the first time that Hayato enters this house. Just because his little sister is in there, he naturally entered in there, to this place that is a girl's garden.

At the moment he gave a single step into the building, he noticed something in there. A sweet smell fills the indoor.

(At any rate, it's a spacious house, huh...)

It's a *guesthouse*, it's something that is meant to be used as a reception. The guided living room, it was approximately the same as extensive as the lobby of the dorm.

The furniture there is also quite luxurious.

However, if you look closely, Sakura's favorite stuffed bear is placed on a chair, there are videogame consoles to the side of the TV; he saw a teacup that is placed on the sink, and he feels that the three girls who are there living their life, become a little charming.

– Nii-san, welco...

As she looked at Hayato's figure, Karen, who was sitting on the sofa of the lounge suit set, placed the Tablet PC she was holding on the desk.

And almost at the same time.

Karen grazed her eyebrows, looking at Emilia's figure that appeared there.

– ...why has Emilia-san also come here?

– I think the same.

It was Sakura who said so with astringency like Karen.

– As Touka is training now, I thought that Hayato-kun, Karen-chan and I, the three of us, could have a good time.

Saying that, Sakura sits vigorously on the sofa with a pop.

– ...so, Nii-san... what do you want to talk about? Is that also somehow related to Emilia-san?

Karen's tone is more stingy than usual. She also had sharp eyes on Emilia.

(As I thought, I shouldn't have come with Emilia...)

Even if he regrets it, it's too late. It can't be helped so, Hayato

continues the discussion.

– Actually, it's about the winter vacation. I think that I'll return to Yamato if I get vacation around New Year...

– Oh, that...

Showing a troubled facial expression, Karen points her eyes to Sakura. Thereupon, Sakura informed to Hayato in a serious look.

– We are sorry, Hayato-kun. That schedule is impossible for us.

– ...eh, is that so?

– Actually, this time I came to Little Garden to talk about the New Year's work for the end of the year, and so I did an appointment of that with Karen-chan. In the end, Hayato-kun was a little related to that conversation. I thought that I least I had to try.

The popularity of Kisaragi Karen who debuted with the producer of <<Oriental Sorceress Princess>> *Oriental Wizard* Kirishima Sakura, there's no way that can remain only at that.

Not only the songs sung by themselves, but also if Karen sang a song alone, she may continue to rank in the top of the music charts for a long time.

Because of that, Sakura says Karen is in a great demand of a year-end popular song program on TV as a *Cinderella girl* of the music world.

– With that said, from now on, Karen-chan's activities will increase as she keeps singing and so, in addition to that, various troublesome procedures will increase too, so I would like to officially keep Karen-chan in my office. It will be done in the same way until now, but now in a proper form. So this is the contract——

Saying so, Sakura handed out a piece of paper in front of Hayato's eyes.

– There shouldn't be bad conditions. Karen-chan has also agreed to it. By saying that, Hayato-kun, sing as her guardian.

– Even if you suddenly say such a thing.... Karen hasn't finished compulsory education yet...

– Yeah, of course, it is written that studies have priority. Souffle will have it properly adjusted.

Souffle- Souffle Clearrail is the manager of Sakura and the president of the office. She is a reliable woman with whom you can trust.

Hayato looked at Karen's face.

– ...are you okay with that?

– Yes.

Nodding, Karen continued.

– I would like to do music activities properly together with Sakura-san. Because I always liked her songs—— being a singer, is my dream.

– ...understood.

If Karen is motivated, then I don't want to disturb her, I want to support her. Besides, entrusting her to Sakura and to Souffle, she will be safe.

Thinking that, Hayato signed the document.

– Thank you, I think Souffle will surely be pleased.

– ...come to think of it, Souffle-san isn't here?

– Right now she is busy preparing the program for the end of the year, so she couldn't come to Little Garden. Karen-chan only needed the approval of Hayato-kun as her guardian, that's why I came in this way.

– Oh, it's that kind of thing.

The manager of two popular singers.

Moreover, because one of her companions is Kirishima Sakura, she probably didn't have any time to come to Little Garden which is floating on the sea.

– ...by saying that, we got the acknowledgment of Hayato-kun too, as all of us will be coming out on the program that we were requested for, we will be staying in Liberia from December 28th to January 2nd. It will take us three days to arrive at Yamato.

– Let me see, about our vacations, how many days did we get?

Hayato asked Emilia that is sitting next to him.

– As long as there is no unusual things happening in the world, I've asked to have a week. It will be from December 29th to January 4th.

Emilia answered while confirming it with the PDA.

– If that's the case, there is little time to spend with everyone...

When thinking of going back to Little Garden the fourth day of the month, they will have to leave Yamato around the evening of the third day.

– Is that so? Then at that time we will return back home.

– I wish I could have stayed together in Yamato for my long-awaited birthday...

– Huh? Hayato and Karen-chan, have the same birthday?

Emilia who heard Karen's muttering said as if surprised.

– Is it perhaps you didn't know about Hayato-kun's birthday? Even though you are always by his side?

Sakura put her hand on her mouth and shows a grinning smile, making fun of her.

– You are wrong! I knew Hayato's birthday! It's just that, I didn't know that Karen's birthday it's the same as Hayato.

- It's often said that something like this is rare.
- By the way, do you know my birthday, Hayato-kun?
- ...eh?

Sakura asked, and Hayato is lost for words.

– Really!? Why are you hesitating? It's March 10th, the season of cherry blossoms! For several years there was a concert on my birthday every year, so I couldn't spend it freely... but after that, I will leave it for the sake of Hayato-kun!

- Sakura-san, what are you saying!?
- Karen-chan can also join us. Let's have a party with everyone!
- Oh! Is it something like that? Certainly in that case.
- By the way, Hayato.
-hmm?
- I don't care at all about Sakura's birthday, but you know my birthday, right?

Emilia asks with a smiling face. As a matter of course, she has been to his side all this time. There is no reason to not know, isn't it?

It can be said than that's the situation.

- Ye, yeah...

He didn't know about Sakura, but he knows Emilia's birthday.

Hayato nodded though he became a little worried that Sakura would be in a bad mood.

However, there are reasons to remember.

- Eh? You know it!

Suddenly, Emilia was delightfully smiling.

– February 14th, I think?

– That's——

Following Sakura, Karen cried out as she bends herself forward towards Emilia.

– It's Valentine's Day!

– There was a time when I saw Emilia's personal data, so I think that I remember it because of that.

– Ehehe, you are right.

Giving a sweet smile, Emilia turn her eyes towards Hayato, rises a finger, and told in a natural way.

– I give chocolate to Hayato. So I get a present from Hayato. Like killing two birds with a stone!

– No, what is killing two birds with a stone...!

– By the way I'm expecting White Day which is in a month later!

Emilia brings her body to Hayato's arm, sitting next to him. The expression of Karen and Sakura sitting in front of him was instantaneously grim.

– Hey, don't get too close! Sakura and Karen are here too!

In a hurry, Hayato pulled away Emilia's body.

– I'm sorry, it's my usual habit...

Returning the body to its original position, she scratches her cheek while feeling awkward.

– ...usual habit?

– Nii-san, what does she mean with that?

– Well...

Being troubled, Hayato stood up from the chair. It is mentally too bad for him to stay in this place for a second longer.

– Fi- first of all, let's return to Yamato for winter vacation as I said earlier. I've just came back from there a while ago, so I can ask to get some vacations even after the end of the < <World Martial Arts Tournament> >, so is it fine to do it at that time? About this, please convey it to Touka. I will inform the President about our plans!

– Ah, Nii-san!

– Wait, don't run away!

Sakura and Karen got up like striking at the desk, and shouted at the back of Hayato who started running. Emilia also got up, raising her voice.

– That's right, Hayato. Take me with yo——uwaa!?

BOOM *CLATTER* *CRASH*

Emilia, who tried to run, stumbled on a short table and made a grand sound.

As expected, Hayato is also concerned about her condition, but he only turned back his head.

(...that Emilia, is she okay?)

As far as he can see, she doesn't seem to be hurt.

– Ow ow ow ow ow...

Her voice was heard as she stood up, then that means she's all right. So Hayato jumped out of the *guest room* as it was without stopping his feet.

Claire Harvey, President of the Student Council of Little Garden, is in the Student Council room, and is doing clerical work. Suddenly, *TON* *TON*, the doors of the Student Council room make a sound, and a face appears.

– Who is it desuno?

– It is me. I will enter.

Using her body to open the door, the one who entered the room is Vice-president Erika Candle. There are a huge number of bags hanging on both arms, and there are also many boxes on both hands.

Looking at that figure, Claire breathed with a small sigh.

– I am deeply sorry for making you take care of that too wane.

– No, this is also part of my work.

Saying that, Erika moves to the short table of the lounge suite set and the sofa. There were similar boxes and bags already there.

– As for this, Claire-sama did this by herself?

– That is correct, and just like you now, Liddy has also received them, so she brought them to me masuwa.

– If that is the case, would you mind if I put the presents in here as well?

– Yes, there is no problem. Those that need to be refrigerated can be separated and put in the refrigerator.

– Can that be done if we do not know what is inside without opening them?

– It does not matter, you can open them. However, it will be helpful if you let me know to who they belong to.

– Understood.

Answering, Erika starts to organize the packages.

That's right——

Today, 23rd of November, is Claire Harvey's birthday, the Queen of Little Garden. In other words, this large amount of packages are presents from students, residents of Little Garden and other fans.

– Errr, Claire-sama...

– What is the matter no?

– I have just finished organizing the packages. Also... how to say it....

– Is something wrong no?

Claire, inclining her head in puzzlement, asked while looking at the bashful Erika

– To be honest... well... I also have a present...

The face of Erika turned bright red, and pushed out both hands that were surrounding her back. A long and narrow box is on top of it.

– Claire-sama, happy birthday.

– Thank you very much masuwa.

Claire stood up slipping out a smile and received the present from Erika's hand.

– Can you open it, and look what is inside?

– Yes, certainly□□

Opening the wrapped box received from Erika, Claire confirms the contents.

– This is... a fountain pen desunone.

– That is correct. I thought of something that might be helpful to

your work.

– Thank you very much masuwa. I will use it at once masu.

The face of Erika, who became happy when she saw Claire with a surprising smile, was dyed in deep red. She was happy. She was tremendously happy.

But she felt embarrassed that her face could be seen.

– Ah, errr.... We- well then, I will return to my work!

Erika lowered her head hurriedly and left the Student Council room.

– It is like the best to get a present like this desuwane.

Claire seats on the chair, and muttered while watching the fountain pen she had in her hand.

Of course Erika, and thus to the many students that adore her, she is indeed happy for receiving all of these presents.

But, there was only one thing that was of concern to Claire.

(...well, he is not supposed to know my birthday monone)

There, *TON* *TON, the door sounded.

– Err, President. Do you have a moment?

It's Kisaragi Hayato's voice.

(Do- don't tell me...!)

Claire's heartbeats turn fast.

(Wh- why is he here? Is that he knew my birthday desuno?)

Her head is in chaos.

– ...do- do you need something, Kisaragi Hayato?

Even though she tried to calm down, her voice was excited.

It was shaking because of that.

– Ah! Well... I have something to talk with the President. Is it fine if I come in?

– Ye- yes... it is fine desuwayo.

While the shaking didn't settle, the door of the room was opened.

– Thanks, if you excuse me.

Kisaragi Hayato comes into the room. His eyes were aimed first at a large number of boxes and bags placed on the lounge suit set table and over the sofa.

– ... that, what are those?

– Th- these are presents desuwayo.

– Presents?

Claire breathed on a big way looking at Hayato with an expression of *what does that mean?*

(As I thought, Kisaragi Hayato does not seem to know that today is my birthday...)

Then why did he come to this Student Council room, I wonder? She continued talking while feeling bothered.

– Today is my birthday desuno. That is way everyone delivered their presents to me desuwa.

– Oh! Is that so? I'm sorry, I didn't know.

– Yo- you do not have to worry about something so particular desunoyo. You would not know if you do not talk with the person itself.

– ...nevertheless, it is a special matter, so let me congratulate you. Congratulations on your birthday, President.

– Ye- yeah... Thank you, very much masuwa...

Although she didn't get a present, Claire was satisfied with those words alone. Besides, with this Kisaragi Hayato now knew about her birthday——

(That means that I can expect something for the next year, right?)

The two of them, dining.

A present from Kisaragi Hayato.

That comeback is——

– Err, President..?

– Huh...?

Calling her out, Claire returned to her senses.

– Th- that's right desuwa. Kisaragi Hayato. What is the reason that you came in here for desuno?

– Well, it is to...

The lives of Hayato and the ones who were selected as members of the <<World Martial Arts Tournament>> have changed completely since December. First of all, less time is spent receiving classes and training with their classmates, and in the form of special training, there are many sham battles with Claire, Krovahn, Nakri and Nesat.

Not only one-on-one fights but also team fights, since it's confirmed that three-to-three battles will take place, a lot of time has also been spent on collaboration and confirmation of teamwork accompanying that.

In addition to confirm their appearance, they were supposed to participate in a CM photography for some reason. There were also coverage and physical examinations.

Because of that, he was away from Little Garden for a while, so Hayato's honest impression is that December passed in a flash.

Christmas is over in the blink of an eye, winter vacation arrived and so, New Year's Eve day is coming. Hayato, who decided to not go home to Yamato, had been staying in the dorm for a long time since entering winter vacation.

There is nothing in particular to do.

So he is taking a nap because of the tiredness of the past month. He is sleeping in the bed of his room from noon today. It's not just because he's tired, but it's a nap to not miss Karen or Sakura's song program that will broadcast before the day changes*.

***TN: A couple of hours before midnight.**

– Hhhhhmmm... it's a good time...

Hayato who awoke naturally, got up from the bed and saw the clock, it was five o'clock in the evening. It's New Year in 7 hours.

– Hmm...?

For the time being, he went down from the bed and thought to take a shower, but suddenly the PDA made a sound.

It's an incoming call from Emilia.

– Hello?

[Hayato, where are you now?]

It was a sudden question.

– In my room of the dorm but...

[If that's the case, won't you come here from there?]

– For 'here', you mean Dr. Charlotte's house?

[That's right, like you said. I can go over there, though. There are almost no people in the dorm right now, right?]

That's true.

Most of the male students go out to their parent's house or go out and travel outside Little Garden on vacation. Now, only three people, including Hayato, remain in the dorm.

– Even so, it's a bad idea if you come here. If the President gets to know it, we will have a hard time.

[But today is New Year's Eve? It's a special day so, Prez will forgive us]

– I'm not so sure about that...

She will be absolutely angry.

He was confident about that much.

[If so, then come over here, Hayato. I called out to Charo and she said that there's no problem. Are you planning to watch the program where Karen-chan and Kirishima Sakura will appear at night, don't you?]

– Well, you might say so. That's why I was taking a nap until now. Because of that I've just got up.

[Ah, I see. Then, let's watch it together!]

– 'k then, I'll go take a shower.

[Eh, things like a shower, Hayato ecchi...]

– What are you talking about?

Well, if Dr. Charlotte is there, we will not be by ourselves, so there's no problem, I guess.

Hayato thought so, and after finishing changing clothes, he left the dorm to head to Dr. Charlotte's house where Emilia lives.

– ...Eh? Dr. Charlotte isn't here?

Entering Dr. Charlotte's house, Hayato who was guided to the living room, heard the fact from Emilia and doubted his ears.

– Charo is designing a plan for the arena of < <World Martial Arts Tournament> >, planning the lunar base, among other things. Work that hadn't been in the original schedule has increased so much that she is very busy, so because of that work she gave up the New Year's holiday.

– Oh! That looks terrible...

– But, it's fine if she is enjoying it, don't you think? She told me that her job is her hobby, so it looks like there's nothing she would like to do other than that. By the way, Hayato hasn't eaten dinner yet, right?

– As I was taking a nap until a while ago, I didn't eat yet.

– If that's the case, you've come just in time. Charo has prepared a good one.

– That's great! What is it?

– Wait a moment.

While looking at the back of Emilia heading to the kitchen, Hayato sighed.

(She is feeling more feminine than usual, because she is not wearing the uniform...)

Emilia wears a white dress that has something similar to frills on the hem.

(... hmm, this kind of situation where I'm alone with Emilia, it is quite awkward...)

While thinking *what's the deal with that*, Hayato found out that he was finally wandering in, and looked around the wide living room.*

***TN: Damn verb, I hate it so much. The complete sentence if anyone gets a better one.** ようやく流されていることに気付いたハヤトはどうしたものかと思い

ながらも、広いリビングをぐるりと見回した。

It is the first time he enters this house, but it gives a sense of déjà vu. Both the interior design and the arrangement of the rooms are almost the same as the *guesthouse* he went before where Sakura, Karen and Touka live.

It seems to give a feel of not being populated.

Besides Emilia and Charlotte——

An Ohime-sama and a scientist, just giving a thought about those two people living together, one would think that the rooms would be messed up, but there is no such a thing at all. Although the cleaning robot is cleaning the floor, it should not be so clean to that extent.

– What is it that you are looking around restlessly like that? Do you worry that much about my house?

In a hurry, Hayato answers to Emilia who asked smiling while holding a spatula.

– It isn't like that, I think that it is tidier than I thought.

– What is with that? Remarking that Charlotte and I are sort of poor at tidying up.

– But isn't that the truth?

– You might say that is the case though. That's because Mei Mei will come and clean this house every day.

– Oh, so that's the reason.

If that's the case, then Hayato is convinced and gives his approval.

– By the way, here here.

– Here, you say...

Emilia puts a plastic bag on the table and attempts to remove something from it.

– Charo bought this for me, thinking that this would be nice if I spend New Year's Eve with Hayato.

– Oh! That's...

Looking at the cup taken out by Emilia, Hayato's eyes shone.

– Charo said that is in common in Yamato to eat this on New Year's Eve. Is it true?

– Yeah, I'm glad to see soba after a long time.

Little Garden is where people from various countries gather. Although there are of course Yamato food shops, you don't see much popular menus of this kind at the cafeteria, but instant noodles were seeing sold though. Because of New Year's Eve, it was probably sold as a special.

– I must absolutely give my thanks to Dr. Charlotte for this.

– ...hm, I wonder what else is in this. It looks like there is something still in there.

After taking out two instant noodles from the bag. What Emilia took out of the bag was a small box. There is a piece of paper covered with rubber bands.

– What is- this——wha...

As she saw that box, Emilia's face turned bright red.

– That Charlotte, what is she thinking!?

Shouting, she throws the box on the desk.

– Why on earth are you saying so?

Hayato turns his line of sight to the box that bounced several times on the desk and fell on the carpet. It's a message from

Charlotte that jumped into his eyes.

While looking at it, Hayato's face turned deep red.

– This thing, don't tell me...

The letters written by Charlotte are [Use for Hime's first time]

In other words, what is in that box are...

– Eh, errr...

Hayato thinks about what happened. Naturally the ambience was getting heavier.

– I'll dispose of this——

– I'll take care of it——

Two palms overlap on the box.

– Eh!

– Ah!

Both of them dyed their faces bright red with each other, and separated their hands in a haste.

At that time, Hayato tripped with a chair.

– It's dangerous, Hayato!

Hayato grasped the hand extended by Emilia. But Emilia can't stop the body of Hayato....

Dragged by Hayato's momentum, Emilia also falls to the floor.

– Uwaa!!

– Kyaa!?

Screams go one after another.

Hayato falls earlier with his backside. On top of him, Emilia looks like is in a posture similar to riding him.

– Eh...?

– Ah...!

The eyes of the couple overlap.

Each other's face, in a twinkle, turns red.

A few seconds passed without a change.

– Err...

It was Hayato who could not stand the silence and raised his voice first.

– If you don't move, I won't be able to stand up...

– Well... I don't mind though...

– Eh...?

Those words returned.

That was something he didn't imagined...

– Look, this is the first time that we spend together a New Year so... to commemorate that... the memories of only the two of us...

– Hey, what are you talking about...!?

The heartbeats rise doing *DOKI* *DOKI*

It was Hayato's PDA that suddenly began to make sound that made them sprung greatly.

It's an incoming call request.



– No way, just when the mood was good...! Who the heck is it? Your younger sister-san? Or is it Kirishima Sakura?

Hayato also stands up following Emilia who stands up despite frustration, takes out the PDA from the pocket and checks to who belongs the incoming call.

– It's Ryōko-obasan.

Moreover, it's a request of video call. Pushing the call button in a hurry, the figure of Ryōko appeared on the screen.

[Hello, Hayato-kun. Can you hear me?]

– It's been a long time, Ryōko-san!

[Yes, it's been a long time. Thus, happy New Year]

– Is that so? Right, there it's...

[Yes, that's right. New Year has passed a while ago already. Are you still in Little Garden?]

– That's correct, in this same instant we are on the east coast of Liberia.

[I see. I'm sorry. Because everyone wants to see the face of Hayato]

– Everyone you say...

[Certainly, everyone]

Following Ryōko's words, the figures of the children of the institution were projected on the incoming terminal screen.

[It's been a while□, Hayato□]

[Happy New Year□!]

[Is that Mihal□?]

[Emile is in there□?]

The children gave their voices one after another.

– I'm here! Long time no see, everyone□□ and, happy New Year!

– Ah, hey! Wait a□□

There are reasons about why Hayato stopped her.

It was the moment Emilia showed her face, when she snatched away the PDA of Hayato.

The children's facial expression solidified, and the silence came.

[...who?]

[A girl?]

[Emile's little sister?]

[But she said Emile]

[Perhaps is cross-dressing?]

The children began to argue seriously.

(Good grief, these guys are really...)

Hayato spontaneously grabbed his forehead.

Finally Emilia seems to have noticed the reasons for the reaction between the children and Hayato.

– Oh, that's right. Come to think of it, I didn't tell the truth to everyone yet...

Ehehe, Emilia laughed, and continued.

– Actually my real name is Emilia Hermit. My real sex is woman. There were a lot of things, so that's why I had to lie to everyone.

Simple as usual, Emilia declares that she is a woman. Naturally, the children were confused.

[Eeh?]

[Is it a joke?]

[*Feeling shocked*]

[Let me touch your breast when you come next time. I will confirm it]

– That’s impossible! Because only Hayato can touch my breasts!

– Why are you saying such stupid things!?

Hayato’s face was bright red while he slapped Emilia’s head.

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Then, Ryōko’s laughter is heard from the PDA.

[Ahaha, to think that Emile-kun was in reality Emilia-chan]

– Well, there are various reasons for it...

[It is fine to leave that conversation for the next time. Above all, I’m glad that both of you are fine. Hayato-kun, if you have time again, come back to Yamato. Of course, Emilia can come with you]

– Yes, of course. I’m likely to have time for a while after the < <World Martial Arts Tournament> > has ended, so I think that I should be able to return by the time of spring break.

– Undoubtedly, I’ll go together with you.

– Well then, we are looking forward to that time. Of course Karen-chan, Sakura-san, Mihal-san—— I think that everyone will be pleased if you arrive with the former members. Of course, Touka-chan too.

– Ah! Which reminds me, Sakura and Karen are...

[They will be singing on the Liberian New Year’s Eve’s program after this, isn’t it? Naturally we know about it. Now, I’m waiting to see it with everyone]

– Oh, I see.

[So I thought of giving a phone call to Hayato-kun who is awake. Watching a New Year’s Eve program in a foreign country, it must

feel somewhat strange since we passed over the year but, I'm looking forward to Karen-chan's gallant figure. Hayato-kun and company. Have a good year]

.[[[[Have a nice yeeear!]]]]

In response to the children's voice following Ryōko, Hayato smiled with a grin and replied.

– Ryōko-san, thank you.

– Well then, happy New Year to everyone!

Following Hayato, Emilia said so and the phone call ended.

– Everyone seems to be fine, don't you think?

– I agree.

In response to Emilia who answered him happily, Hayato puts the PDA in his pocket.

– Okay then, I'll take care of this for now——

– Ah...!

Without a moment's delay, Emilia picked up the small box and put it in her pocket.

– I'm going to boil water to prepare noodles.

– ...no.... Or should I say, do you know how to make instant noodles?

– What does Hayato think I am?

– A noisy-tongued Ohime-sama, I guess...?

– Muu.... I'm not someone who eats instant noodles on a daily basis. Charo eats them frequently. So I've prepared them many times——

– Oh, I see.

- ...in that case, I'll prepare them.
- Ah, wait a moment?
- ...what?

Hayato calling her out, Emilia stopped her feet.

- There is still another cup of soba inside the bag, isn't it? I thought about calling Touka. I can't imagine her preparing soba by herself.

- ...muu

Emilia pouted her lips while continuing her words.

- Well, it's okay if Hayato would like to do so.
- Then, I'll call her.

When Hayato contacted her on the PDA, Touka came right away.

It seems that she's been practicing until the end, she has just ended.

- Even if it's New Year's Eve, you are carefully practicing, huh?
- Unlike Shinshishō and the others, I'm still training by myself.

Saying that, she drops her back on the sofa. On the television, end of the year scenes in various places were flowing.

(Come to think of it, I won't be able to hear the jayanokane* this year...)

***TN: 除夜の鐘 Temple bell rung 108 times on New Year's Eve**

Hayato thinks that at the same time the spectacle of the end of the year at Yamato is projected.

Somehow, he feels a bit lonely.

After the news ended, the opening of the popular song program is transmitted.

– Hey, it started!

Hayato spoke spontaneously. Thereupon, holding in her hand the cup of soba, Emilia comes back.

– I made it just in time. I’ve just finished putting in the boiled water. It’s hot! Did Karen-chan appear?

Emilia asks, and puts the cup noodles in front of Hayato’s eyes.

– No, not yet but..., ah!!

Looking at Karen coming down the stairs alongside Sakura, Hayato’s eyes shone.

– Hey, Emilia! It’s Karen! Karen has appeared!

– I can understand that much by looking at you. With that said, you are over excited. Hayato... really, is like a father.

– That’s good enough. I will stop with all my power any man that approaches to Karen!

– Good grief, what are you talking about...

Continuing, Emilia brings the portion of soba to Touka and another portion to herself.

– Almost three minutes have passed, right? They are almost ready.

Emilia opens the lid. Subsequently Hayato and Touka also opened the lid.

What jumps into their sight along with the steam is, the delicious-looking shrimp and vegetable fritters mounted on the soba. As soon as she saw it, Touka said.

– This seems to be really delicious, don’t you think? It is my first

time eating soba since I came to Little Garden.

– If you are eating in the middle of the song of Karen-chan, Hayato's excitement will make him spill it, so don't eat quickly.

– I know that.

Although saying so, Hayato was concerned that Karen would appear again soon, then he couldn't remove the eyes from the TV.

Then after a while——

While viewing the popular song program, after they ate all of the soba of New Year's Eve.

– Haa, I ate too much...

Emilia is very satisfied. Although he understand the impression by the nuance of that voice, Hayato asked just in case.

– What is your first impression of the soba?

– Ramen in comparison to udon, it's something where you have to slurp like *ZUZUZU* to eat it. In addition to that it was interesting and very, very delicious! Is it the same for Hayato?

– Same, it was delicious. When I eat this, I feel like I'm really having a New Year's Eve.

– Me too.

Following Hayato, Touka said.

– Is that so? I'm glad that both of you are pleased with it.

Emilia smiled as she heard the impression of Hayato and Touka.

– ...that's why I would like to thank Charo for this... but there was *that*...

Emilia sharpened her lips and speaks in dissatisfaction.

That is of course, the letter and the small box.

- What is *that*, I wonder?
- No, I'm talking to myself. Don't worry about it.
- Ah, sure...

Hayato thinks that it's good that Touka was there now. If he was with Emilia alone, they would have been strangely conscious.

There is no mistake that it can't be helped to be worried about the small box that is in her pocket. For the time being, Hayato decided to change the conversation to avoid further questions of Touka.

- Apart from that, is Karen and Sakura's turn yet?
- Wait a moment.

When Emilia operates the remote control of the television, the display screen of the program becomes smaller, and the singing order is displayed next to it.

– Oh, it seems that the turn will come in a bit. There's a fifteen minute news break after this, and it looks like the second half of the round is immediately after that.

– They were told to use their Hundred, so it may take time to prepare the stage.

- That's why they are after the news.

The music program is interrupted, and the news program starts to stream.

- Ah! Gudenburg!

At the same time that the hometown appears on the screen of the monitor, Emilia raised her voice.

Fireworks launched at the moment of the end of the year and images of the people who are delighted with the New Year in front of the royal palace are displayed.

– You, really didn't have to go back to your country?

– Otou-sama told me that I have to try my best towards the tournament now. His physical condition is stable now, and thus I saw his face in the news.

Emilia smiled when she saw the figure on the terrace of the royal palace and looked at the king's hand waving for the people.

– Nevertheless, you should call him. I think that he will surely be pleased.

– Yup, I know.

– Which reminds me, Touka, have you contacted your foster parents and Shishō?

– Of course. I've called Yui-san a while ago.

– I see.

Because of Touka's serious character, then it means that such a place seems to be reliable.

At the end of the news, that moment came at last.

– He, hey... It's Karen's turn. Will she do it well, I wonder?

Hayato was already feeling uneasy.

– It's been a while since she started singing, is she going to be all right stepping on the experiences as it is?

– ...how to say it, I think that Hayato is probably more nervous.

– Is, is that so?

– That looks to me.

Emilia shows a facial expression like being amazed.

Hayato looked at Karen projected on the monitor.

At the moment she left Little Garden [It seems that hundreds of millions of people watch the program at the same time... Uuu ~, I feel nervou ~ s] Karen seems to be dependable, even though she said that.

Together with Sakura she is doing a light talk with the host of the program. It cannot be compared with the time of the school festival. It seems that she is determined to be a *pro* with this.

– Look, it’s as you said.

– R- right...

The palpitations of Hayato’s heart still can’t be settled.

And finally, the moment to sing has come. Seems like Sakura is going to sing first. On the pitch dark stage, the figure of Kirishima Sakura wrapped in a pink costume is displayed.

[Now, there is little left to this year, everyone! Let’s enjoy a little more of this New Year’s Eve in the remaining hour!]

When Sakura called out the audience seating, the intro of the song flowed out, and the stage was gorgeously colored. Due to her singing voice, the atmosphere in the audience seats changes instantly.

– As expected of the so called *Oriental Wizard*, huh...

– Certainly as expected, isn’t it? I don’t understand the songs that well but I can see that it’s amazing.

– Yup.

Both Emilia and Touka were interested.

The stage of Kirishima Sakura has not a single imperfection, it was flawless.

She manipulated her field type Hundred < <Spinning Fairy Tale> > *Fairy Fairy Tale* and sang while switching costumes and stages one after another. Naturally during that, great cheers wrap

her up.

That's why Hayato was worried about Karen who is the next one.

(Really that Karen, is she okay, I wonder?)

Hayato had heard that Karen singing is her debut song.

However, the play has started——

Christmas Day.

A girl in pajamas is lying in a dirty bed in a small room.

It's Karen.

Her dream is to become something like the singer she admires.

What she wishes for are lovely costumes and a microphone.

She wants a piano to make songs.

It doesn't have to be an expensive piano.

It doesn't matter if the keyboard is small.

But, she knows that she can't have such things.

There is no Santa Claus.

She will not come to a poor house.

At midnight, she was singing to the silver world outside the window.

Then——

SHAN *SHAN*, the sound of the bell began to echo.

What appeared from the night sky where the snow flutter down is Santa Claus who was riding her reindeers.

It's Sakura.

It looks like she is packed with cotton inside the costume.

The body was big and it could be seen on a white beard until her chin.

Rising the index finger towards the audience seats that were leaking out a laughter with a *Shhh* to calm them down, Sakura Santa turns her eyes once again to Karen. Sakura Santa went to Karen who is inside the room, and stopped the sleigh in front of the window.

– Your songs, were very wonderful. As my expression of gratitude, I will grant you your dream.

By the magic of Sakura who wore the appearance of Santa, the pajamas worn by Karen, the young lady, shows a transformation into a pretty costume of Idol style.

At the same time, her bed changed to a gorgeous stage. She runs up on the stage, while turning her lovely skirt.

Therefore, a melody flows out. It's Karen's debut song. Matching to that melody, Karen sings.

It's a singing with a sense of stability that no longer seems to belong to a newcomer. Everyone in the audience seats are falling in love. That stage performance is also magnificent. As expected of the protégée of Kirishima Sakura.

Everyone thought that it was enough to call her < <Little Garden's Little Witch > > *Little Little Witch*.

As soon as the song finished, the stage turned pitch dark again. The spotlight illuminates where Karen is standing on the bed.

The clothing was also back to the original pajamas.

It's the end of a momentary dream.

Karen said, towards Sakura Santa outside the window.

– Santa Claus was really here. Thank you. I was very happy.

But——



Karen shows a sad expression.

– What is it?

– I want to sing even more.

She knows that it is a selfish wish of hers.

Still, she couldn't help but feel desire.

– Is that so? Your song surpassed by far my imagination, and it was wonderful. So let me help you.

Santa throws off her costume. What it came out from that is the singer that she admires

It's Kirishima Sakura——

She reached for Karen and said.

– Sing with me this time.

When Karen picked up her hand and stood up, the shabby room seemed to change once again into a stage. The cocktail light on the ceiling glows and the intro of the song started to play.

Karen and Sakura sang the debut song as a band within the reverberating great cheers.

– It looked like a musical, it was awesome, isn't it?

Emilia said at the moment the duo ended their song. When they look at the screen of the TV, it shows the clapping hands of the people in the audience seats, with all of them standing.

– Is that so? I'm glad...

With this, Karen's turn should be over.

Hayato who breathed with a *Fuu*, said so leaning his back in the chair, completely exhausted.

– What's that reaction!? Were you not listening to their song?

– I was so worried that Karen won't be flustered, that the songs and their content didn't come into my mind at all.

– Good grief... If that's the case, then you should watch the recording later.

– Oh! You are right.

Sakura and Karen disappear from the stage while waving their hands. The climax of the show, was the apparition of the two of them. Then, a chorus of the official theme of the program with all of participants. And that, marked the end of the show.

– Thirty minutes to New Year...

Turning off the TV, Hayato muttered.

Seeing her, Touka is asleep lying down on the sofa.

He guess that it might be due to the today's training, so it can't be helped.

– Put this on her.

– Gotcha.

Hayato puts the sheet that Emilia has presented to him to Touka. The room has become silent. Emilia is sitting before his eyes.

(Damn it! It wasn't a good idea to turn off the TV...)

Touka is asleep, so practically in the room there are just the two of them.

He guesses that there is also one reason for the program to start.

DOKUN *DOKUN* the reverberating sound from inside his chest, it's bigger and faster than usual.

– Say, Hayato.

– Eh, wh- what is it...?

– What's wrong, why are you flustered like that?

– Eh? Not at all, I'm not flustered. Forget that. What's the matter?

– Are we not going to see the fireworks on the terrace soon? If so, I think we can see them well there.

– Oh, is that so...? Fireworks...?

He remembered being told. In the moment of the New Year, fireworks will be launched even from Gutenberg.

– And? We will not go?

– No, let's go.

Hayato stands up from the chair. It's OK even if he sees Karen and Sakura's turn again afterwards. There is only this moment that he can see the fireworks of New Year's moment with his own eyes.

– What about Touka?

– She is sound asleep, so I don't want to wake her up to put her on the bed. Let's go, only us.

– O-okay...

The mobile terrace is wider than they imagined, it's as extensive as the room of the dorm.

Following Emilia who appeared first on the terrace, Hayato also went out to the terrace. Little Garden is currently sailing to the northern hemisphere.

—— In other words, it's winter now.

Nevertheless, Little Garden is surrounded by Tempered Glass and because it has its own air conditioning management system it's cold compared to the summer, but not too much.

It is a bit chilly.

– That's right, I'll get something to drink. Which do you want, warm or cold?

– I guess a warm one is fine, right?

Immediately after Hayato answered.

– Kisaragi Hayato! Moreover, if it isn't Emilia Hermit no!

Hayato turns his eyes to the direction of the voice that he heard. He saw the figure of a girl wearing a red uniform on the terrace of a big house at a distance around 100 meters from this place.

Student Council President of Little Garden, Claire Harvey.

In the next following ten seconds, Hayato's PDA rang. Of course it's an incoming call from Claire...

[Both of you, what is the reason for being in a place like that by yourselves desuno?]

– Well, that... Emilia invited me to spend the New Year together...

[A few hours ago, Charlotte Dimandius was in the laboratory. Is she back at home now masuno?]

– Err, well...

Hayato decided to answer frankly, if he tells a lie, he thought that he will be exposed sooner or later.

– In a story I heard from Emilia, it seems she is having the New Year in the laboratory.

[That is correct desuno]

Claire, who heard the answer, laughed daringly with a *FUFUFU*.

[So in other words that means that are just the two of you now desuwane?]

Of course Hayato realized that Claire's voice was trembling slightly with anger.

– You see, that.... There's Touka at home, but she is sleeping

now...

[Get out from there now and come to my house]

Claire said to stop Hayato's excuse.

– Huh?

[There is no problem if Emilia Hermit comes with you]

– Hayato, what is it with Prez?

Asks Emilia being next to him.

– To go with you to her house.

– ...Eh?

[As I am saying, it is fine for you to come desuwa. This is an order from the President]

There is no need to discuss about what to do. There is no choice but to go.

At any rate, it's the President's order. Emilia should understand that as well. She admitted obediently to comply with Claire's order. Anyhow, in this situation, Hayato being with those two, he won't be able to do *romantic* things on New Year anyway.

That is obvious.

With Claire now their numbers are three and although their plans differ, it's better to avoid an important event of passing a New Year together, if you think about it.

– You can sit there.

Hayato and Emilia.

The terrace of Claire's residence visited by them had a sense of life with plenty of things placed, such as chairs and desks, compared to the terrace of Charlotte's mansion.

As instructed by Claire, Hayato sits down on the Montmartre chair that is colored the same as the white round table and placed on the side of it.

– Emilia Hermit. Being at home, the dress you are wearing is pretty cute masuwane.

– Ehehe, you think so?

– ... you are, really.

Claire placed tea utensils in front of Emilia who is laughing as if misleading.

Continues with Hayato at the front.

And finally putting in front of her, she makes black tea.

– Please have a drink.

Along with those words, Claire also sat on a chair. Hayato, in accordance with the recommendation, tasted the black tea in the cup that was poured in.

– It has a ginger-like taste.

– It is to warm your body masuwayo.

Certainly, as Claire says, the more he drinks, the more he feels like his body gets warm from within.

– It's a little bitter for me. I'm going to put sugar in it.

Saying that, Emilia stood up trying to pick up the sugar.

– Ah...!

At the same time, Emilia muttered *Damn it!*

With a *KATAN*, the floor of the terrace made a noise under the table.

That thing had fallen from Emilia's pocket.

If that wasn't enough bad luck already, after *that* bounced once on the floor, it stopped moving at the feet of Claire.

– ...what was that?

While sitting in the chair, Claire picks up the little box that rolled under her feet and brings it in front of her.

In an instant, her face got dyed in bright red.

– Wh-wh-wh-wh-wh-what is this desuno!?

After Claire hits the box on the desk, she also strikes the desk with her hand.

GACCHARI the tea utensils made a noise.

– Emilia Hermit, explain this at once!

Emilia, with her face dyed in deep red, answers lowering her head.

– ...Hayato, I must absolutely tell her...

– Wha, what are you...

Claire is upset.

Looking at that figure, she loosened her mouth, broadly grinning to the extent that it's not noticed, and Emilia continued.

– So, I thought that I should be prepared in this way...

With those words, the aim of attack moves completely from Emilia to Hayato.

Hayato's spine turned cold due to the sharp eyes pointing at him.

– KI-SA-RA-GI HA-YA-TO...

– No, please wait a moment. Hey, Emilia. Please stop this joke! The President is seriously going to do it!

– Hahaha. It was so amusing to tease her.

– ...A joke you say? What do you mean, could you explain it to me masu?

– The thing is, Dr. Charlotte prepared this thing to make fun of me and Emilia.

Following Hayato, Emilia also explains.

– That's right, it's just as Hayato said. Charo prepared this joke to make fun of us. If anything, ask Charo. We are not lying.

– So it is like that desuno. Good grief, Dr. Charlotte, doing stupid games...

Saying that, Claire took the box and put it in the pocket of her jacket. Looking at that, Emilia shouted.

– Ah, what are you doing!?

– Confiscated desuwa.

– Eeeeeeh.

– There are things that you will regret desu. Students do not need to use such things, don't you agree?

– In short, you are going to make use of the “use for princess's first time”!?

– Do not say such a thing like if it was a joke too!

Claire hit the table with both hands this time.

– Anyway, this is confiscated—— I will not return it. This is the President's... no, it's an order as the Captain of Little Garden desuwa.

Claire declared so in that place.

Due to the change that occurred in the sky, the line of sight of Hayato and the others is directed to the sky.

– It seems like we are 10 minutes to finish this year.

Who said that? It is Emilia.

– Looks like it.

Hayato's eyes answered, turning towards the series of numbers projected on the top of Little Garden.

[9:42]

The countdown to New Year has started.

– Hayato... how was this year for you?

Asks Emilia.

Thinking for a little, Hayato answers.

– ...to be honest, there are so many things that I don't know how to express it somehow. But, Karen's body has gotten better, and I was able to see you again, so I think that it was really good to come to Little Garden.

– It was really good to come to Little Garden... huh? If you summarize your first year like that, then I am very happy desuwane.

– How was the past year for the Prez?

– ...eh, to me desuno?

– Yup, these kind of things won't be easily heard.

– You, you are right desuwane...

A glance.

Claire points her eyes to Hayato.

In that moment, among the encounters with him, the incidents up to now have been called from her mind.

Her breast being rubbed in the duel at the arena.

Seen naked at the time of < <Operation: Bird in Cage> > .

The thing of being kissed to defeat the *Dragonfly* type.

Along with that, her face was blushing very fast.

– ...Prez? What's wrong?

– Eh? Ah... that...since you entered the school, it is not an exaggeration to say that it was really like a rollercoaster*. Since the establishment of Little Garden, there has never been so many fights one after another——

***TN: The term used here was 怒濤 = surging waves.**

– Indeed. There were things like the incident with the terrorists and the *Third Attack*.

– Yeah...

Looking at Hayato's understanding, Claire felt relieved. It is because he didn't see what she was thinking.

Three minutes to leave behind this year.

Emilia mutters while watching the countdown.

– I hope that we don't have a big incident or a Savage invasion next year.

– ...however, at the beginning of the year there is the < <World Martial Arts Tournament> > . Many statements have already been issued from organizations opposing the advance of the humanity to the space like the opposing groups and the anti-Slayers organizations, etc. That is, according to the circumstances, tough measures may come out——

– In other words, terrorism or the like may rise?

– Correct, it is as you say desuwa.

Hayato answers with a meek expression.

The ability of the Slayers is not used for human conflict.

It is used to protect humans.

She is constantly saying that.

That is why the fight against the terrorist organizations should be avoided if possible. But the world will not allow it.

Not only Vitaly's raid, but also the terrorist attacks by anti-Slayer groups also occurred during the *Third Attack*, moreover, Fritz and Latia were involved in that.

Hayato never met him directly, but the Slayer that Latia was yearning for, a Slayer of Warslan, died.

That's something that certainly could have been happened to Hayato.

If he made a mistake, there is a possibility of encountering a terrorist, the chance of killing it with his hands, the probability of death of an important person, as well as the possibility of himself to die.

(In case that happens, can people kill me?)

I don't know.

Even though my life have fallen into crisis. But those moments weren't situations where my life could be something like snatched away.

...but.

In order to live.

To protect important people.

The time may come before long where I won't be able to accomplish it.

At that time——

– It appears that the year has ended.

Fireworks are rising in the sky making sounds.

Hayato, Emilia and Claire stood up from their chairs, approaching the side of the fence installed surrounding the terrace to look at the fireworks.

– Hayato, Prez. Happy New Year.

– Happy New Year..

– Happy New Year to you too masuwa. I look forward to your success this year masuwa. I will be under your care masuwane.

– Yup, please treat me well.

– I look forward to working with you.

Starting with Emilia, Hayato and company exchanged New Year's greetings with the fireworks at their back, and shook their hands.

– Now that the greetings are done, this marks the beginning of the New Year. Although we just looked back at the year that have just passed, would you like to you two tell your goals for this year at once?

– The goals for this year, you say...?

Hayato starts thinking if there's anything.

– Is there anything wrong?

– Well...

The answer came out faster than he thought.

– Next year, both Emilia and President—— as well as the others, I hope to have an enjoyable New Year together with everyone.

– Hayato, you say good things. If that's the case, then it's the same for me.

Claire who heard the answers from both of them unintentionally smiled.

– In that case, I will do the same masuwa.

– Eh? The President won't go for the victory at the < <World Martial Arts Tournament> >?

– That is something different masuwayo. Of course, I am aiming for the championship but——

Then, with their shoulders lined up side by side, they were staring at the fireworks of the New Year coloring the night sky.

□□ A HAPPY NEW YEAR □□*

***TN: that was written like that in the raws**

Three days passed since the beginning of the year.

Karen and Sakura came back to Little Garden.

Giving their greetings three days late, they eat osechi and ozoni that both of them have prepared*.

***TN: Osechi is food served during the New Year's Holidays and ozoni is a special soup with Mochi (rice cake) that is eaten in the morning on New Year's Day.**

Chapter 2: Calbrera Island / Fate / Friendly Reunion

The day before the opening ceremony of the < <World Martial Arts Tournament> > .

Participants and companions, including Hayato and Emilia, took off in a couple of aircraft towards Calbrera Island, where the venue was located, while being sent off by many residents of Little Garden. Calbrera Island is originally an uninhabited island, located on the eastern coast of the continent of Liberia, on the side of the *Sunshine State* District.

Along with the decision to hold the < <World Martial Arts Tournament> > . It was purchased by Warslan Company from an individual owner, and development was advancing at a quick pace.

It is said that in the future people will come and go from the moon base and the earth as this will not only be used as a souvenir facility but also as a sightseeing facility.

The air trip from Little Garden to Calbrera Island is a little over four hours.

Members who are focused to participate in team battles are on board of the personal airplane < <WL – 03> > and the rest of the people who are being transported in a jet airplane, landed around in the afternoon at a temporary airport built on Calbrera Island.

Little Garden attends together with more than thirty households.

First of all, they will move on a reserved bus to the hotel that they are lodging.

It's a beautiful beach that you can't think that people's hands didn't get in until several months ago.

After five minutes, the bus stops as soon as it reaches the section where buildings of thirty or forty stories are lining up, including those still under construction.

It can be seen from the window that its height is near twenty stories high, and from the style of the gate that it's a splendid hotel.

– Is this the hotel that we are going to lodge, right?

Emilia asks Claire who is sitting in the front seat.

– Yes, as you said desuwa.

At the same time Claire replied, Hayato noticed that Warslan Company's company badge was drawn on the signboard of the hotel. It's possible that Warslan Company is doing the administration.

– However, it is only for the members who participate in team battles desu. The other members will be at the hotel that can be seen over there masuwa.

Claire turned her index finger towards outside the window. Beyond there a hotel of around 15 stories high is located, and it would take near 3 minutes on foot from this place to get there.

– After all it is the same as with the airplanes, the place that we are lodging is different from Hayato-san and the others.

Noah murmured that mixed with a sigh.

While the hotel in front of them looks like a five-star super luxury hotel, the one that they are going to stay at seems to be a three-star rating.

– Oh well, in the end we are no more than attendants.

It was Shuemei who said so in order to soothe.

From the first year of Little Garden's Martial Arts Department, Ryu Shuemei and Noah Sheldon, and together with those two, Alphonse Brwewstadt, are the attendants for the < < World Martial

Arts Tournament > >, and together with Hayato and company, were visiting Calbrera Island.

Speaking of why those three, it was because they raised their hands when the Student Council was recruiting attendants.

Those three people were chosen in consideration of the results of the people closely related to the participants of the < < Campus Martial Arts Competition > >.

– But even us, for the time being, will participate in the tournament...

– Well, that can be so but...

Indeed——

Both Shuemei and Noah are supposed to participate in individual battles of the < < World Martial Arts Tournament > >.

Shuemei, Noah and Alphonse were told about that after having decided to become attendants.

– Participate in a single match and try your own power.

That was suddenly told from Claire.

Naturally the three of them as well as the students of the Martial Arts Department from different years, were surprised.

It was because they couldn't remain as one of the best 16 of the < < Campus Martial Arts Competition > >, let alone finalists of the tournament.

But Claire said that [the result doesn't matter], and a relieving air started to flow.

– It is a great opportunity to try out how much ability you have, a test outside the school is a good experience.

Something similar to that.

– However, I believe that you should fight for the name of Little Garden in order to not besmirch its name masuwa. Have you understood desuwane?

Despite being nervous about the words of Claire, Shuemei and the others answered firmly with a [Yes!].

And thus, the reason why they are in this place.

Of course, there are also a few people who are attending to participate in single matches by their own will. Kenzaki Touka is one of them.

It looks like she heard the story of Shuemei and Noah. Claire said to answer the conversation of the two.

– Although certainly the hotel's appearance and status are different, it does not change that it is from the same keiretsu* of Warslan, and the food served during the morning, noon and evening is the same.

*TN: Conglomeration of businesses linked by cross-shareholdings.

– Eh? Is that so!?

It was Alphonse that go up without a moment's delay, and gave a happy voice.

– Surely, there will be plenty of delicious things, isn't it~?

– Ufufu, you are looking forward to it desuwayo. Besides, those who stay at that hotel are authorized people from Little Garden and Warslan Company. There are officials of Liberia and Federation of Britannia, but they are friendly people, and because security is also solid, so it is fine to say that you can rest assured at that place desuwa.

In other words, the possibility of terrorism and conflict to occur it's said to be extremely low.

– After that... oh right desuwane. Sakura-san and Karen-san will be at the same hotel as ours, but I have heard that there is a

business meeting right away——

– Claire-sama, it seems that the pickup has just arrived.

The eyes of Erika who said that, are pointing outside the window. It was Sakura who gave a voice afterwards.

– Really, Souffle!?

´- Yes, it's Souffle-san.

Karen said following Sakura.

So when Hayato looks outside the window, he can see Souffle Clearrail coming out from the hotel bringing two hotel-keepers with her. Souffle is Sakura's and Karen's manager.

– Members of team battles will descend here masuwa. In this way the bus will take the rest and head for the hotel to stay masu. You are free to do what you want after arrival. However, those participating in single match should take time to rest for tomorrow. Just because the meals are delicious, overeating is strictly prohibited desuwayo.

Smiling while saying that, Claire continued.

– Well then, see you tonight—— let's meet at the opening ceremony.

Preliminaries for single matches will be held shortly after the opening ceremony.

So Claire went down from the bus by blasting. Subsequently Hayato and Emilia also bid farewell to Shuemei, Noah, Alphonse, and Touka and got off the bus.

Karen and Sakura also get off the bus.

Then Souffle who was approaching, called them out.

– Claire-san. Hayato-san and everyone, it has been a while. Thank you very much for bringing along Sakura and Karen until here.

After saying so, and lightly lowering her head, Souffle sets her eyes to Sakura and Karen.

– You will be moving to the stadium soon. Just take what you need now, and deposit the rest of your bags here. I will bring you to the room.

– Understood. Karen-chan, have you separated the necessary luggage?

– Yes, it's done.

Sakura and Karen took out only small items such as small bags, wallets, PDAs, and gave into custody the suitcases to the hotel-keepers.

– Well then Nii-san, see you later.

– See you then, Hayato-kun.

The two of them and Souffle got into the courtesy car and begin to move.

After seeing them off, Hayato and everyone of the members participating in team battles, decided to check-in in their respective hotels.

– Oh, my room and Hayato's room are next to each other.

– U~, mine is at the upper floor... hey, Fritz. Will you exchange room with me? My room is next to Latia's...

– Emilia Hermit, what are you talking about masuno? It is decided that men and women are in different floors.

– ...eh? For real?

– It is obvious desuwa.

Claire sighs like being amazed.

– Besides, we have not come to sightseeing desu. Because as

members of team battles, as representatives of the organization, and unlike other people, we will be in trouble if we do not possess a firm awareness masuwa.

– Yeah yeah, I know I know...

Emilia clogs her ears with both hands to not hear the scolding. From there, Erika butted into the conversation.

– Claire-sama, the time for the representative meeting is approaching.

– It is already that time desuno?

Claire checks the time with the PDA.

The time for the meeting has certainly drew near.

– The representative meeting is supposed to be for the three members of the Student Council masu. Each of you are free to spend your time until the friendly reunion at night desuwa.

– ...then, does that mean that we can look around this island?

– That is correct, there is no problem wayo.

Claire replies to Emilia's doubt.

– However, you must absolutely not spend your time beyond the friendly reunion. Are we clear desuwane?

After Hayato and the others returned an answer. Claire, together with Liddy and Erika, climbed the elevator while rolling the suitcase themselves. They will go to the meeting after putting their luggage towards their respective rooms.

– Well then, Hayato. Let's go to put the luggage in our rooms too. After that, let's gather here in this lobby.

– That means, that we are going to look around the island without taking a rest? Are you really fine with that...?

Hayato said, amazed.

He was so excited, with his heart going *DOKI* *DOKI* about leaving Little Garden for an extended period of time to then head to Calbrera Island that he could not sleep well yesterday. Therefore, he thought that he would take a short break if he entered the room.

– I’ve got tired of moving, but we are not fighting tomorrow. From tomorrow the number of ordinary guests will also increase, so if we go around watching the island it has to be today.

– That certainly might be a reason, huh.

Hayato is convinced by Emilia’s words.

There is a certain feeling that he wants to see the island, and then it may be good if it’s today.

Similarly to Hayato, Latia also thought.

– In that case, can we go look around the island together?

She asked to Hayato and Emilia from the side. Then she looked at Fritz.

– ...of course, you also want to go look around together?

– If you say something like that, then I will go with you but——

While answering to Latia, Fritz looked at Krovahn, Nesat and Nakri.

– Are you coming with us?

– I’m not going.

– I think’ the same.

Nakri immediately showed consent to the words of Krovahn who responded frankly and continued.

– Sorry, but I won’t be with you, even if it’s going around the island.

Nakri walked to the elevator and pushed the button. The door opens soon and goes into it. Those three, Nakri, Krovahn and Nesat live under the same roof in Little Garden. Similarly, the same room was specially prepared in this hotel. It's because that person can easily monitor the movement of those three people.

Though they did great efforts in the *Third Attack*, the monitoring of the three people was not solved. Therefore, the three rooms are on the same floor of Claire's room and the members of the Student Council's rooms, and a surveillance camera is also installed at the entrance.

Following Nakri, Krovahn also enters the elevator.

However, a person——.

Only Nesat doesn't move.

She stood still and stared at a certain boy.



It's Kisaragi Hayato.

Hayato noticed that glance.

(Perhaps she wants to go with us?)

To Hayato, her eyes seemed to appeal so. Thinking about making sure of that, Hayato tries to call her out.

– He——

However, his voice was drowned out by the voice of Krovahn that puts over him.

– Hey, Nee-chan. Why are you standing there doing nothing? Let's go.

– ...Ah! Yes, got it...

While looking back at Hayato and the others several times, Nesat gets into the elevator.

The door of the elevator closes, and the trio disappears.

(After all, she might wanted to go...)

Hayato thinks so, that is, because he noticed that she was turning her little sorrowful face at him. But still, he couldn't call her out.

(I should have called her out, right...?)

A voice caught on Hayato who was thinking about that while looking at the door of the elevator.

– Is something wrong, Hayato? Come and get in, we are already here.

It belongs to Emilia.

– Eh...? Oh, right...

Looking there, Fritz and Latia were already on the elevator. Hayato got into the elevator with Emilia who called him out, and ascended towards the floor where their rooms were.

Fifteen minutes after entering the room assigned to each one. Hayato and company, that means 4 people, are in the lobby where

they promised to gather and went out to sightseeing Calbrera Island.

While the city is wrapped in a bright mood ahead of the festival, the figure of security guards and Liberian army wearing heavy equipment is in sight, probably as a precaution of terrorism.

Nevertheless, when Hayato and the others passed by, smiles accompanied with [Good job] or [Are you participating? Do your best] and the like greet them.

That's because Little Garden is also one of Liberia's companies. If they were representatives of another organization or country, it shouldn't be the same.

– Ah, err....!

Suddenly a voice was calling them, and so Hayato and the rest stopped their feet without thinking. Then turned their eyes towards the direction of the voice. Standing there, it was a boy.

Looking at him, his age seems to be less than ten. Behind him, the figure of his parents, and a little sister could be seen. As soon as the boy saw Hayato, he immediately rushed over with a cheerful expression.

– Um, you are Kisaragi Hayato, correct?

– Well, that's right but...

– Truly? Hooray! May I have a sign if you like?

– Huh?

Hayato rounds his eyes to the boy who thrusts before him a memo and a pen.

– ...a sign, me?

The boy nods with confidence.

– Hayato, sign it up.

– Err, but I, signing...

It's Emilia who launched a lifeboat from the side to Hayato who is confused and can't get a hold of that thing.

– Hayato, shouldn't you write your name?

– Ah! ... But...

– Look! *Fan service is fan service!*

– No, even if you say *fan*...

Hayato received a pen and a colored paper from the boy.

– ...but, how is it that you know me?

– Perhaps, you saw that CM*?

***TN: Commercial. It is written like that in the novel.**

– Ugh...

Hayato's chest hurt when he was told about the CM.

That is at the end-of-year——

It is just before Christmas. Hayato suddenly was called by Claire and asked him to appear on the CM to announce the < < World Martial Arts Tournament > > .

Of course, Hayato refused.

It was because he didn't think that it was his job. However, it was already decided and against his own will and with no possibility of being substituted, he was forced to shoot.

It's possible to say that the result was terrible. He fumbled his lines completely, and his facial expression was stiff.

But that is actually being broadcasted on TV now.

Of course Hayato couldn't watch it properly. When it's about to

be broadcasted, he changes the channel immediately. It's like a trauma.

– That's a reason, but I'm a fan of Hayato since before that. Actually I, at that time, I was staying in the Zwei Islands——

– Eh? That's...

– Yes, it was at the time for the attack of the Savage. It was Hayato-san who helped the participants who came to the concert like us at that time.

– What? How is that you know that? Perhaps you saw the video of the battle that was circulating on the net?

Emilia asked visibly surprised. Because the battle of the Zwei Islands isn't written in the profile information of Hayato published for the tournament.

– Well, Sakura-san and Karen-san were talking about Hayato-san in a magazine interview. In that, it's written about the time of the Zwei Islands. *Thanks to Hayato-san, we can still be alive, and we can sing our songs——*

– Those guys, saying such things...

– I think so too. Because of Hayato-san, I'm alive now.

– No, it was thanks to everyone else.... At that time, I was still just a novice.

– But, it's certain that Hayato has defeated the Trenta at that time. Come on, give your signature quickly.

– Eh? Ah...!

Hayato writes [如月ハヤト]* on the colored paper.

***TN: His name, of course. Kisaragi Hayato.**

– I guess this... is fine, right?

Hayato timidly returns the memo pad.

Then, the boy's expression shone like the sun.

– Th, thank you very much! The rest, that is...

Fritz seemed to understand what he was trying to say looking at the boy who held the colored paper with great care, while his body squirms.

– Hayato, it's a handshake. Am I right, boy?

– Ye, yes!

– You first, Hayato.

– Oh, okay...

Hayato stretches his hand towards the boy. To that hand, the boy grasped it tightly.

– Hayato-san, me too... that... in the future, I want to be a Slayer and save someone, just like Hayato.

– I, I see.... That... I also said such a thing, that if you want to become one, then I think you will surely be one. The Hundred will respond to the feelings of the user.

– The feelings of the user, you say?

– Yup, if you really want to be a Slayer, then you'll become a Slayer. So, believe in yourself and do your best!

Following that line, it's Emilia that said so. Finally, the boy said.

– ...Hayato-san. Please do your best at the tournament! I am rooting for you!

– Ye-yeah....

After shaking hands, the boy went back to his family.

– Hayato, we can't lose if it comes to this, don't you think?

POP, Fritz clapped his back. Subsequently, Latia also hits his back.

– Don't betray the *fan's* expectations, okay?

– Don't put more pressure onto this...

Emilia, Fritz and Latia gave a laugh when they saw Hayato showing a troubled look.

Hayato and everyone step forward towards the stadium where the opening ceremony will be held tomorrow. There, a lot of food stalls are lined up like in a festival, it was what they heard from the security guards.

After walking the road between buildings made of brickwork that continued from the hotel, and crossing the bridge, they can see a scenery full of nature and a huge stadium.

The surroundings, are also big parks.

– As you can see, there are various food stalls just like we have heard, it's exactly like a festival!

– Yup, that's true.

Emilia responds to Latia who looks around the park and shouts happily.

– Moreover this is a development *concept* called Gulf City, it is really a beautiful town, isn't it?

Although the size is quite superior, including the stadium and the buildings on this island, it gives an impression that the atmosphere they feel there is somewhat near to Little Garden, and that is probably because Warslan developed it. The experience at that time, should of course be utilized.

There is only one point of difference, and that is, the river that flows everywhere in the city. It's said that all of it can be used as a canal.

– Oh, it looks like we can board the ship from there!

Latia's finger indicated a small pleasure boat that comes and goes from this place.

– What do you think? Aren't we going to get on that?

– Why not? Hayato and Fritz, you are fine with it too, right?

– Indeed.

– I don't mind it.

Hayato and Emilia, Fritz and Laita, each one of them pay the fee and board the pleasure boat. The course goes around Calbrera Island, and it is only available for 4 people.

– From what I can see, the customers are Slayers from Little Garden, huh?

Immediately after setting sail, the voice of the man as the sōda-shi* cried out.

***TN: It uses a term which I couldn't find a translation over the internet. It is 操舵士. It is not helmsman as that is 操舵手. So, I'm gonna stick with that term. Take a literal translation which could be (steering wheel person)**

– Yes, that's right. You realized it nicely.

When listening to Fritz's answer, the sōda-shi gave a loud voice and laughed.

– As soon as I saw that uniform... come to think of it, didn't you guys appear in the tournament's CM?

– Ah! Oji-san, you saw that!

It was Emilia who gave a happy voice.

– Yeah, because it was being displayed in various places.

– Uugh, it was being displayed so much...

In addition, when he remembered what happened at the time of shooting, Hayato felt bitter.

– The Hayato of that CM was sooooo cool, so don't feel depressed. If you like, want to watch it now?

– Uwaa, stop it!

Hayato rapidly stood up to stop Emilia who tries to play the CM on the PDA. Then, the ship sways greatly.

– Uwaa!?

– Kyaa!?

Because of that Hayato fell down. Emilia also falls down as she was pushed by him.

– Ow ow ow ow...

Realizing it, he was in a posture like pushing down Emilia. It's the opposite posture of New Year's Eve time.

Besides, Hayato's right hand is grabbing Emilia's breast from above the uniform. Hayato has not noticed it yet.

(What is, this...?)

Hayato moves his right hand.

Thereupon, a sweet voice leaked out from Emilia's mouth.

– Waai... Haya...uunh!

– Eh...? Ah! Sorry!

Hayato, who grasped the situation, hurriedly released his hand and apologized.

– Leaving that aside, are you okay?

Hayato stood up and stretched his hand to Emilia.

– Y, yeah... I'm okay.

Emilia takes his hand and stands up.

– Brother, please stop doing whatever you want. The ship will roll over, okay?

While laughing, the sōda-shi said.

– I'm sorry...

Even though it was a joke about the ship rolling over, it didn't change the fact that it was a dangerous act. Hayato obediently apologized and sat on the seat again.

Then, the ship starts to move again.

After a while, the old sōda-shi man resumes talking.

– Anyway, I'm happy to give a ride to an amazing Slayer that appears on a CM. Besides, there was something I wanted to say to your company.

– For “company”, do you mean Warslan?

– Yes, that one. The space station, this island, the scenery of this *Sunshine State* district, almost everything changed because of Warslan.

The tone of his voice it's not like he is blaming them. While smiling, the sōda-shi man said that.

Nevertheless, Fritz responds as being in shame.

– No, we apologize for that.

– You don't need to apologize. I also liked the original familiar scenery for many years, but I think that the development of culture and technology can't be stopped. Thanks to Slayer-san and everyone this world is also protected from the evil hands of the Savage, and I'm also thankful to Warslan for the job that I currently have now.

– We really appreciate those words of you.

– Well, leaving out that, I will support you in this tournament. To come up with a talk like this, it's an encounter worth of treasuring*.

***TN: 何かの縁: from jisho.org: “chance encounter (worth treasuring); a connection made with another person by chance”.**

– If that's the case, then we must win the championship.

– Yup, definitely. The championship.

Emilia nods facing to Latia.

– We can do it!

That said, Emilia pushes up her fist towards the sky.

– Yeah!

But only Latia got on board.

That was kind of frustrating.

Emilia inflated her cheeks and stares at Hayato and Fritz.

– Come on. Hayato and Fritz, join us, join us!

– You are right, motivation is important for things like this!

Both Emilia and Latia were drawing closer, so Hayato and Fritz prepared themselves with an ‘It can't be helped’.

– Okay then, let's do it once more. We can do it!

This time the three* people all together with a “YEAH!” gathered their voices.

***TN: I don't know if this was intended or a mistake in the raws.**

– That was very fun. The old man was a nice person.

– When he recalled the moment of the shooting, I suddenly got tired...

After they toured Calbrera Island in the pleasure boat doing a circle lap around it.

Hayato and the others descended from the pleasure boat and turned around the island on foot.

The place where Hayato and his friends are heading now is the square they found while on board of the pleasure boat.

There were many street stalls and food stalls lined in a row.

Even though the tournament starts from tomorrow, although there are many things being prepared yet to see, some of them have already started business in that place. Food stalls selling kebabs*, others selling pizzas* and hot dogs*.

A food stall grilling huge meat, and food stalls selling drinks including alcoholic beverages. It can also be seen street stalls and others that are drawing portraits.

There were open air stalls* selling original T-shirts, caps (hats) and shot glasses of this competition.

***TN: The term used is 露天 which means “open air”.**

– Fuu fuu fuu... the thing over there, looks interesting, isn't it?

It's Latia who said so to the shooting stall that lies ahead of her line of sight.

It's the typical type where you aim to something with an air gun.

Speaking of the target practice of Yamato, the gifts themselves are arranged side by side. However, in this stall, silver-like boxes were arranged in order from large to small ones.

It seems to be a mechanism where if one of them is dropped, the

number of the tag in the box is checked, then you will receive a prize of the same number decorated on the prize shelf.

Gun aiming at prize, this is a type of a one handed air gun by looking at the restrictions written on the explanations sign.

It seems like with this method, the prize will not be destroyed by its power.

– Are you fired up?

Fritz asks in regards to Latia.

. Uh huh, exactly.

– So, maybe I should try it too?

Continued Emilia who said that.

– ...what about you, Hayato?

– I'm fine. Shooting isn't one of my specialties. Maybe Fritz should give it a try?

His Hundred is a *Long Shooter* type, so he handles huge rifles.

However, his reaction wasn't affirmative.

– Hmm. I'm *gonna* take a look for now.

He said so with a cool expression.

– Right then, it's just the two of us.

Emilia and Latia approaches the shooting stall.

Then, the shopkeeper of the shooting stall frowned as if he was in trouble.

– No way, my first costumers are Slayers...

– Perhaps, we can't do it because we are Slayers?

– ‘Can’t do it’, I didn’t say that but.

To the question of Emilia, the shopkeeper answers with a bitter smile.

– Besides, you are Slayers of Little Garden. You are the favorites for the championship, so I’m guessing that the students are receiving training as regular mercenaries. You even have shooting, am I right?

– Well, it’s true.

Looking at Latia which makes *FUFUN* with her nose full of self-confidence, Fritz sighs as if he was amazed, and put his hand over her head and strikes it with a *PON*.

– Being proud, but you are an amateur.

– Shut up...! So, how about it? Can we do it? It’s a no no?

– Okay, in order to confirm the ability of Slayer-san, you can do it for the time being.

– All right! Then, let’s do it, Emilia.

– Yup!

Latia and Emilia who paid with money, each one received a gun.

– It’s lighter than the gun we use for practice.

That was the impression of Emilia holding the gun.

– Is that so?

Latia who doesn’t seem to catch the difference, tilts her head in puzzlement.

– Well, in the end it’s an air gun. An ordinary gun and a produced one are different. In the first place, there are many types of guns.

Fritz cuts into the conversation from the side.

– Try shooting once for now, I think with that you can check the feeling.

– So I have three tries, huh...

If she hits even once, then it will be the end at that point.

It's the form of getting the prize of the number in the dropped box.

Of course, there's no bullet for test shooting.

– For now, I'll be the one to proceed. First thing to aim are the big ones, then I'll try to aim the small ones.

The distance is near 20 meters.

What Emilia aimed at is a white box of 10 centimeters square.

PAN

A gunshot echoes.

But, the target didn't fall.

– No waaay... I missed...

Emilia unexpectedly puts out her tongue. Her bullet shot a little above the target.

– After all it has a different feeling than regular guns. The reaction after shooting was also light, it feels somewhat strange.

That was Emilia's impression. But she didn't give up.

– But, the next time, I'll make us of it. A strategy that I came up with.

The next time she will absolutely drop it, her eyes were full of confidence.

– Before that it's my turn. I'll also aim for a small one.

Latia's aim was also a small box of ten centimeters, the same size as Emilia.

Looking at that figure, Fritz enters to stop her.

– Wait a minute! I think you are severe with your arms.

– Shut up, first of all I'm the one targeting! The first one will be something like a trial shoot.

– Well, if it's fine with you, play it as you like...

Fritz, a little surprised, puts his hand on the temporal side.

– You mentioned it about a while ago, but Latia is no good with guns.

Hayato didn't know that well.

– ...she is D rank.

Hearing that answer, Hayato's cheeks have a cramp.

– So that means, she is lower than me, huh...

D rank is barely a passing score in the evaluation.

By the way, Hayato's rank is C.

Emilia and Fritz are in the top, S rank.

– Dammit, I need to focus now. You guys must keep silent!

– Yeah yeah.

Fritz turned the palm of his left and right hand into the sky.

The silence arrived.

Latia, who matched the muzzle with the target, put the finger on the trigger.

PAN!

Along with the gunshot, the bullet is fired.

It didn't get the target, and it missed by a huge margin compared to the bullet that Emilia had fired.

– B- but why... I was convinced that I aimed properly...

– K' then, next is my second shot. Seeing that I have two chances and that small thing is difficult, I'll try to lower the level.

Emilia decided to aim for a different target than the previous one. Looking at her, Latia said.

– Is it the second smallest box in the series the target...? Is that the strategy that you were talking a while ago?

– The previous target, as that it's on the top, it doesn't have anything in the surroundings, so now I can hit another one of the boxes if I miss that one. Something like a *lucky hit*, don't you agree?

Saying that, Emilia pulled the trigger.

Immediately after that——

One of the targets danced wonderfully in the air.

But, it's not the one Emilia was aiming for.

– Ahaha, I missed but I got one.

In conclusion, Emilia's strategy was successful.

The bullet that diverted to the lower left grazed another target at the right upper corner, and fell.

– Uncle, what number?

Emilia asked the shopkeeper who took the box to check the number.

– It's the 45th.

The shopkeeper shows the numbered tag that was in the box.

– So it is the 45th... it's that candy!

Emilia looks at the prize shelf and makes a bright expression. On the other hand, Hayato had a bitter smile.

– That thing, it's a dagashi* that is sold in Yamato... isn't it?

***TN: Cheap sweets. There's a manga revolving about dagashi, named dagashi kashi. You can order them online too.**

Delicious twelve sticks set. That was the prize placed at number 45.

– Have you ate this before, Hayato?

– I often ate them when I was a child.

– Look, here are 12, all different kind of tastes are included!

– Wow! I did it!

Emilia who received the delicious stick set from the shopkeeper has a full smile.

– Hey hey, Hayato! Don't you think that hitting something from Yamato in here is kind of predestined?

– Predestined you say, what is with, that...

It seems she is very happy, so it's hard to say, but the price for a single stick shouldn't be that much.

It will be less than half of the price paid to make 12 shots.

(But, for a thing like this to be in a festival...)

The luxury goods that are lined up above the prize shelf, it should only be inside the small one.

In the first place, the way they are currently lined up, it doesn't necessarily mean that such prize is contained in the box*.

*TN: That means, if the position of an item in the prize shelf is the 9th, the ninth box may not contain the number 9 inside of it.

– Here, eat you too, Hayato.

Emilia opened the bag filled with twelve delicious sticks, and offered one of them to Hayato.

At the same time he sees the flavor, Hayato distorts his mouth.

– That, it's written as extremely hot...

– Eh...?

Emilia confirms its taste with an absentmindedly expression.

– Uwa, it's true! This, how spicy is this?

– It's spicy enough to sting around your mouth. Don't dare to eat it without something to drink.

– Oh, you are right. Then, what about another one?

– Ok then, I'll take this.

The one Hayato that took, was one with a consommé flavor. He used to like this in the olden days.

– Emilia, can I get one too?

– Yup, it's okay. Eat one, eat one.

Emilia presented the bag, after the one she liked picked one, it's Fritz who asked from the side.

– K' then, I guess I'll take this?

It was one with a cheese taste that Fritz took.

– I'll eat this then.

Emilia opens the bag and chooses pizza taste.

– Yeah, tasty.

Emilia is very satisfied making crunchy noises while chewing the flavored stick.

– Latia, won't you eat too?

– I'll shot this bullet.

Ignoring the bunch of flavored sticks pushed out by Emilia, Latia prepares the gun again.

Fritz asked, chewing a cheese flavored stick.

– Which is the next you are aiming for?

– It will be the same small one as before.

– ...Ha? What are you saying? Emilia gave up on that, right? It's impossible for you...

– If I can concentrate then I'll get it somehow. Even with the previous test gun, when I concentrated, I could shoot through the middle of it.

– That was a coincidence. It occurred only once and.... Your arms are trembling now. In that state, you will absolutely miss.

– I told you to shut up!

She fired the bullet together with the scream.

Latia got angry when she saw that it deviated far more than before.

– Fritz! It was your fault that I missed, don't you think!?

– No, no matter what you think, it isn't my fault. In the first place, you put too much power when shooting. Lend me a moment.

Fritz takes away the gun from Latia.

– He, hey, there's one more shot left!

– ...no problem. I saw you and Emilia doing it by the side. I already understand the characteristics of this gun. Hold this.

– Oh, okay...

Fritz returned the bag of flavored sticks to Emilia to empty his hands, and prepares the gun.

– Look, we'll shoot right in the center.

There was no lie in the words of Fritz.

There's no hesitation.

Suddenly, the bullet released from the arms that are stretched out, hit splendidly the small box as expected.

– Well, it is roughly like this.

– Amazing!

It is Emilia that raised her voice spontaneously.

Subsequently, Latia's back jumped from the arms of Fritz.

– Amazing, amazing Fritz!

– Well, it's my specialty.

Surely Fritz said that as a matter of course.

– Why didn't you try to take the initiative, was it because it was too easy?

– That can be part of the reason. Leaving that aside, what's the price?

– Right!

Latia asks to the shopkeeper of the shooting stall.

– Hey, what's the number?

– Number 5... it's the number 5!

The shopkeeper who just picked up the box, confirmed the contents and gave a surprised voice.

– Wow, it's that!

Latia points her line of sight to the number 5 on the prize shelf. It's a jewelry box that is placed there. A photograph of a ring with a beautiful shining jewel on it is decorated.

– That is one of the featured items this time. It's a tournament limited edition. It also has a serial number and logo of the tournament. Nee-chan, Take care of it.

– Yes, of course!

Latia, who received the box containing the ring, was really in a good mood.

Holding the box, she is spinning around like if she was dancing.

– Right, Fritz. Can I open it and see what's inside? I haven't seen it directly yet.

– Because this is yours, do as you like.

– Yeah, then I'll open it.

With a state of fullness of expectation, Latia opens the lid of the box while her heart was doing *DOKI* *DOKI*.

– Wow, this is the ring... It's nice, and very beautiful!

Hayato thinks that's true. The ring shining in the box looked more beautiful than what he saw in the picture.

– It's good isn't it? For Latia to get such a beautiful ring. Hayato, can you take a ring for me too?

– Well, there are no more rings already...

The ring disappears from the prize shelf.

– Hey, uncle. Is that ring being sold somewhere?

– Since it was sold before the tournament, they aren't selling it anymore. That's why I told you that it was special, right?

– Tch, I see. If that's the case, can you buy a different one from a different store somewhere? Look, let's match them for the two of us. We'll put it on the ring finger together.

– You, what are you talking about...?

Hayato sighed, amazed.

– ———wha!?

DON.

The body of Latia who received an impact rises a little from the surface. Following that, a scream leaked out from her mouth.

– Ah!

Latia's open eyes look at the ring which has fallen from the box due to the shock received on the back.

The small and round thing rolls over the concrete, passing through person and person that walk down the road.

– Wa, wait!

Latia hurriedly runs after the ring. What lies ahead is a waterway.

However, at last minute, Latia was able to recover the ring.

– Fuu... I'm glad.... Really, I'm glad...

Spilt a breath after feeling relieved.

Latia tells that to the big guy she collided herself with, and he raised his voice in a way like showing off his bare fangs.

– Hey, you... apologize!

– Wait what?

The giant, skinhead man turns around.

– ...are you telling me, to apologize?

– Yeah.

The height of the man is around 2 meters. He is very muscular, and looks intimidating like a standing bear.

Nevertheless, Latia continued her words without being frightened or hesitating.

– Because I crashed with you, this ring was about to drop into the drain!

Latia aimed at the ring and cried, but the man made a single laugh.

– Hmm, what about it. Blaming me, when it was your fault, standing and doing nothing. Don't speak about complaining and rattling for a mere ring.

– WHAT!?

– ...huh, are ya fired up?

– You are the one who's fired up.

– You wished for it.

Latia, who heard the reply of the man, took out the Hundred from her chest and shouted.

– *HUNDRED ON!*

Pink particles on both of her hands and legs, and so the body of Latia, creates the Martial Arts type armament. < < Beast King, God of Military Arts > > *Strike Beast*.

That's the name of her Hundred.

The man expresses a broadly grinning smile, takes out the Hundred and shouts just like Latia.

– *HUNDRED ON!*

The Hundred shines in red particles, it flips and creates armament in his body. It was the same Martial Arts type as Latia.

– Gert, stop.

The one standing still raised her voice, it was a woman standing next to the man.

A woman with a sharp look, but a little smaller than the man of high stature.

– What do *ya* want, Elena. It's that one who's picking a fight. *Ain't* no need for me to withdraw. Hey, stupid brat. Come. If *u* think you can defeat me.

The man, called Gert, moved his fingers towards Latia to provoke her. Looking at that figure, Latia flies into rage.

– Of course I think that I can win!

Latia, who lost her temper, tried to kick up the ground, in order to attack Gert.

– Hey, stop it!

It was Fritz who caught her shoulder and stopped her movement.

– Fritz, why are you stopping me...?

Latia who saw Fritz when she looked back, noticed there was a very regretful look on his face.

– I was about to lose the precious ring you gave me due that guy...



Latia showed the ring inside the armed fist to Fritz.

– But, you recovered it so is fine, isn't it? Besides, if you fight while holding it now, the ring will break. Moreover, you won't be able to be in the tournament.

Beforehand, Claire told them. Duels of Slayers other than the matches on this island are forbidden. Those who violate it will be deprived of their qualification to participate in the competition.

– ...I'm sorry. Certainly, you are right. Blood was on my head, I couldn't make a proper judgment. Let's withdraw from here.

Latia cancels her armament.

– Keh, so *u* understood huh.

After clicking his tongue. Gert also cancelled his armament, and went off the spot together with the woman.

Giving his back towards Latia, he shows his teeth.

– He was really furious, that guy.

– Don't mind it anymore. Apart from that, does that ring suits your finger? Give it a try.

– Unh, wait a moment, okay.

Hayato and the others kept staring while Latia thrusts the ring on the left index finger while her heart was going *DOKI* *DOKI*.

– Yeah, it's perfect!

Latia raised a satisfied voice. On the index finger of the left hand that was held in the sky so as to show it to everyone, the ring fits well.

It reflects the solar rays that began to incline towards its center, glittering with orange color.

– ...k' then, should we go back to the hotel soon? There is still a little of time left but I would like to take a break in the hotel a bit, don't you agree?

– Yeah, you are right. Let's do that. It would be better to keep that ring in a proper place.

As well as Emilia who answered so, Hayato and Latia also accepted Fritz's suggestion. En masse, started to go back to the hotel.

[Come to the hall of the first floor of the basement fifteen minutes before the friendly reunion starts]

Hayato who received the confirmation mail from Erika gathered with Emilia, Latia and Fritz who received the same mail, and visited the hall of the first floor of the basement which is the venue of the friendly reunion.

People of many countries and organizations are already gathering inside, and colorful uniforms can be seen.

Hayato said while looking around the hall.

- It's been a while somehow, since then.
- It's been some time since [Operation: Bird in Cage].

Emilia answered.

- Is that the operation when we were arrested in Little Garden?
- Huh...?

Hayato turns back to the voice coming from behind.

Besides Nesat who called out, there were three people in total, Krovahn and Nakri, and they are lined up, with their uniforms of Little Garden.

- You guys also came.
- Because the President said that she gave us the right of veto, so it can't be helped.

Krovahn replies to Emilia who has called him out. Continuing

that, Nakri frowned, surveyed the surroundings and said.

– If I could, I would be leaving right now from this place. There might be some of those guys who were made to fight with us and ended up worn out... you were one of them too.

– Huh? Are you trying to pick up a fight with me?

– ...if so, you want to?

– Humph, I couldn't fight you in the < < Campus Martial Arts Competition > >, and now I'm able to do full armament. I'm very confident that I won't lose.

– Then, do you want to fight me?

– If that's what you want!

– What are you doing...?

It was Liddy that brought her face closer and said that separating them from each other.

Behind her there were Erika and Claire.

– That girl is in the wrong, she tried to pick a fight with me. I didn't do anything bad.

– Latia Saint-Émilion, that does not explain anything wayo.

Claire sighed a little disgusted.

It's Fritz that added explanations to supplement there.

– It was because there are people who were knocked down by them during the < < Operation: Bird in Cage > > in this place, so that kind of conversation started a quarrel. Originally, it was a talk about what to do if a fight started...

– Uh huh, so that is what it is desuno... in the case that the matter in question results in a fight, just call me immediately. As long as you have the approval of the administration to participate

in the tournament, and as long as you are members of Little Garden, then I will explain and defend that you have been doing properly as Slayers up to now. In any case, do not fight. And if you say something, apologize properly. Is that clear wane?

There is no reply from the three people. It's the same from Latia.

– Latia Saint-Émilion, and also the three Olfred, answer properly——

– In the case that you have understand, then I will not force you that much. This is a special location, right desushine?

Claire who stopped Erika who tried to scold them, smiled and continued.

– Well then, we will go to give our greetings. You may have a meeting with your dearest persons.

– ...even if she mentions dearest persons, staying just in here is quite...

It's after Claire leaves from there.

He can't find the figures of Sakura or his little sister Karen.

– Hey hey, Hayato, Hayato.

It was Emilia who raised her voice while pulling continuously the sleeve of Hayato's uniform while he was mumbling and looking the surroundings.

– What, did you find someone?

– No, it's not that. I thought that the cookery in there seemed really delicious. Can we go to get them now?

Emilia looks at the cookery while her eyes are shining, seeming to drool with impetus at any time.

– But, that comes after the toast, right?

– How much will it take until then? How many minutes? How many seconds?

– Even if you ask me that, I don't know that, you know.

– Maybe, it depends on President Judal's speech, isn't it?

Latia said that.

– Incidentally, have you guys seen anyone over here or there? I have a hunch I saw someone somewhere, but I can't remember.

The line of sight of Latia is aimed at a place where mature middle-aged people wearing decorative military uniforms have gathered.

– If I'm not mistaken, is he the man who served as the commander of < <Operation: Bird in Cage> > ?

– Yeah, indeed. Now that you mention it, I had the feeling that it could be him.

A staff member of the hotel came there and offered them a drink. It's for the toast. Hayato and every one of his comrades picked up a drink. The man's voice resonates through the microphone.

– Everyone, silence please. From here, Judal Harvey-sama, one of the organizers of this tournament, would like to give a toast.

Following those words, Judal Harvey appeared on the stage.

– First of all, to everyone who were able to come to this place, where the opening of the tournament is about to come—— to Serivia-sama who is working together as an organizer, to the staff, and to the collaborators, Ladies and Gentlemen, I truly give you my thanks.

Starting with lowering his head and saying that, the speech of Judal began.

Humanity has created countermeasures called *Hundred* due to the threat of the Savage.

No matter what kind of threat it is, the humanity will not give up, by narrowing the wisdom and the evolution, we will overcome it.

Thus now mankind is now trying to expand the scope of activities not only to the Earth, which is our home, but also to the outer space.

This tournament will be the first step.

There are various obstacles and organizations that interfere, but we will not succumb to it.

The tournament absolutely will be a success and humanity will advance into the universe——

It is a subject to set especially a path to the base of Lunaltia.

– A few words to finish— the construction of the Lunaltia Base is also my long-cherished wish. If I can, I would like to take direction of it with my own hands. I think that saying that it is too much coming from the organizer, but that is what I wanted to say.

The venue of the friendly reunion begins to stir with those words.

(Onii-sama, what on earth are you——)

Claire wonders what is the next thing that his older brother Judal is about to say, she felt uneasy as it was inevitable.

– The organization administrated by me, Warslan—— or, the training institution where my younger sister, Claire Harvey, is serving as the representative of Little Garden, whose ability is considerable—— *Odd makers* are also publishing the same numbers. Although I am not the Pope, let me have the privilege of predict that here, that one of us will definitely win this tournament.

At the same time as the words were released, the gazes that emitted hostility were directed not only to Judal, but also to Claire, Hayato and the members of Little Garden.

(What the, why it has to be something——)

Claire shook her fists with a lot of anger. It's too vicious to be a joke. It has to be a humble position, rather than declaring your victory here.

That's what you say in order to provoke.

Then, for the Slayer's good fight and the success of this competition—— and for mankind's space development. To celebrate that first step—— let's toast!

Although it's a special toast, the atmosphere from some time ago is nowhere near cheerful.

Glasses and glasses bump against each other in the stormy atmosphere, making sounds. It seems that in this situation you could think that the glass will crack due to the tense ambience.

In such circumstances, Hayato and the others bumped the glass with their surrounding comrades with a certain degree of sorry, and tried to drink the orange juice.

Nothing could be done, because it's unlikely that they will face the glances of complete hostility towards themselves.

It was the first time since the entrance ceremony that the glances have turned in this way.

But, this time it's not just him.

The same look is directed to all of the people of Little Garden and Warslan, and among them are Judal and Claire, representatives of the two organizations, who are in a state of going through intense fire.

Regardless of Judal, the involvement of Claire would obviously mean to say a complaint or something. It could be said that it was something like that for Hayato and the others.

In such situation, Claire keeps on moving, covering for her brother's behavior, in order to calm the representatives of the other organizations.

– Hayato, I brought some food.

– ...you, when did you...

He noticed that Emilia was holding plates with a lot of food on top of them on both hands.

– As soon as the toast finished I went immediately to pick them up.

– Oh, okay...

Apparently Emilia doesn't seem to care about the surrounding gazes at all. Hayato continues to crawl from the eyes in the surroundings.

– ...Hayato, what's wrong?

– I'm looking for Karen from some time ago but I can't find her.

– You don't need to worry. Hayato is truly a *siscon*, isn't it? Surely Kirishima Sakura is doing something about it.

– That may be so but...

– Karen-chan is already a little mature. Who said that a cute little girl was allowed to travel? You said it, or not?

– That story is different from this.

Those two people, Sakura and Karen, belong to Little Garden. There's a possibility that they could be involved in troubles. Despite this, Emilia doesn't seem to worry.

– They aren't different.

While saying that, she brought dry-cured ham and salad from the dish to her mouth.

Then, she brought quiche to her mouth.

– Latia. That one, isn't Wendy?

– Oh, certainly.

Latia made her eyes shine, looking at the girl who was wearing the uniform of the Liberian army, and that was in front of Fritz line of sight. Emilia also turns her eyes to the girl.

– Weren't you both together during the *Third Attack*?

Emilia and Hayato are talking about the girl named Wendy Velvet. They weren't directly on the same team, but participated together in < <Operation: Bird in Cage> >

– Yeah, we were.

Fritz answers.

He and Latia fought together with her in < <Operation: Bird in Cage> >, and then again in the *Third Attack*.

– Would you like to go and greet her?

– Yeah.

Fritz and Latia went together to where Wendy is.

Even so, Emilia remained enjoying the food as usual.

– Hayato, this quiche is delicious. Won't you eat it too?

She continues, reaching for pepperoncino this time.

– You really eat a lot huh...

Although being amazed, Hayato knows that Emilia's tongue is fond for food*, and keeping the expectations within his chest, he tries to stretch the fork to the quiche.

***TN: The term used means: to grow fat, to grow fertile, to have good taste. 肥える.**

But——.

– Emilia-sama, Hayato-sama!

Hayato stopped his hand with the voice that suddenly arrived to his back. Emilia also tried to move the pepperoncino to her mouth, but stopped her hands, and turned back.

They voice was from a girl they knew.

– How are you doing, Claudia?

– Emilia-sama, it's been a long time!

Claudia hugged at the waist of Emilia who placed the disk on the table.

She, Claudia Lowetti, is a Slayer belonging to the Allied Forces of Britannia.

Because she was concerned about Emilia, she was hostile to Hayato who robbed her, but after a number of reasons, now she opened her heart.

– Well, Claudia was also saying that she will compete in team battles.

– Yes, that's right. So I came to express my greetings. I came because I have to talk about them as well.

– Eh...?

– Douglas!

Looking at the man and woman before the eyes of Claudia, Hayato and Emilia are lost for words.

Douglas, the third prince of the Kingdom of Wenz. Next to him was a woman who supposedly was the one who stole the Hundred from Hayato's room. Moreover, the couple, like Claudia, are wearing uniforms of the Slayer troops, part of the regular army of Britannia.

Gerrard Kilfelthar, a high official in the Kingdom of Gudenburg,

who was with them, opened his mouth.

– Actually I was wondering if I should have told you about this earlier, but the Allied Forces of Britannia had hesitated whether to let them participate or not until the end.

According to Kilfelthar, the abilities of the two are quite high compared with the average of the Slayer corps of the Allied Forces of Britannia.

It's surprisingly high. If it's in normal conditions, he should have had the power to enter as a member of the team battles without fail.

However, he's now being imprisoned as a criminal——

But, there is nothing prohibited in the rules for criminals to participate in the < <World Martial Arts Tournament> > .

There are many loopholes, and if related rules are created, then there is a possibility of using those rules to reduce the strength of other countries.

Therefore, the judgment is up to each country and organization whether there are certain conditions for them to be members of team battles or can't participate.

– In short, the Regular Army of Britannia chose to let the couple that is here to participate.

– Exactly, Emilia-sama. There were a lot if internal discussions, but in the end, the King of Britannia approved it, bearing the responsibility of it.

– Is that so, Otou-sama...?

Moreover, every time you win and advance to the next round, making it to the finals, it's said that there is a special case that the term of sentence will be shortened.

In addition to that, it seems that it's precisely because his behavior in the prison has been recognized as exemplary.

– Emilia-hime. And, Hayato-dono. What I did in Gudenburg it's inexcusable.

Douglas put a knee on the floor, gradually lowered his head and continued his words.

– Thanks to the consideration of King Granald, Emilia-sama's father, who allow to this me, a criminal, to show in as a representative of the whole country, I considered to contribute with the readiness to devote myself for the victory of the Federation of Britannia.

– It's fine, raise your head. Stand up, okay?

– I am grateful of your kind words.

Saying that, Douglas stands up.

– Hey, Douglas.

– What is it?

– I think that the Douglas of now, has become a good person.

– Is that so?

– Yup.

Emilia nods happily.

– If it's the Douglas of now, I think that you can quickly become a representative of Britannia Slayer's corps.

– It is an honor to be said that from Emilia-hime.

Douglas smiled happily and showed his gratitude.

Kilfelthar opened his mouth afterwards.

– In fact, since I heard that Douglas-dono may be on the < <World Martial Arts Tournament> > we spent all the free time given every day for training to improve our skill as Slayers. Looking at that figure, it's no exaggeration to say that we worked on our

relations in various places in order to confirm the participation of Douglas-dono.

– That means, that the strength of Douglas is considerably higher than when he fought Hayato?

– I do not know how much my current abilities are, but I definitely want to fight against Hayato-dono in order to ascertain that.

Saying that, Douglas stood up in front of Hayato and stretched out his hand.

– Of course, I will fight fair and square next time.

– It is I who should say so, I look forward to it.

Hayato and Douglas exchanged a tight handshake.

– Hayato is considerable stronger than that time, so I believe that it will not be so easy to win.

– Yes, of course I understand that.

In response to Emilia's words, Douglas expresses a smile.

Furthermore, Hayato has been strictly ordered from Claire to not use the power of Variant at the tournament. That's the same for Krovahn, Nesat and Nakri.

When Hayato fought against Douglas before, he won using the power of the Variant together with < < Double Deployment > > *Dual Act*.

But now he can do *Dual Act* without the power of the Variant, and he can use the technique of his Shishō, *Zaneizan*.

The battle experience has also increased through the *Third Attack*, and he is certainly becoming stronger as Emilia says.

– Well then, we are leaving.

– See you later, Emilia-sama.

After parting ways with Douglas and the others, and after a little of time.

– ...yo, guys.

Next, an extremely worn out voice approached to Hayato and the others.

– Ah, Dr. Charlotte.

– So Charo also came to the party.

– Yeah, because the President told me to come...

Charlotte says so with empty eyes, and shakes her head repeatedly up and down. If you look closely, there were big shades under her eyes.

– ...Charo, have you not slept at all?

– That's correct, I've slept three hours every day since I came to this island. It's similar as not sleeping at all in the past few days. As expected from a development in a scale of several months coming from a decision held in a meeting. Although it was truly strict, I'm relieved to be able to hold a meeting peacefully somehow...

– Really? You did it well... or should I say, have you already gone to bed? There is still work to do?

– Tentatively, I planned to do so as the greetings are over. There is also a *test* of the equipment to use at the opening ceremony from early in the morning tomorrow...

– Umm, that gives around five hours of sleep, am I right...?

– Yeah, like you said.... Okay then, once you've finished the friendly reunion, please sleep at ease...

Leaving her words with them, Charlotte left the meeting place with an unsteady manner of walking.

Fritz and Latia, who just finished their greetings with the girl of Liberia, came back there.

– It's something wrong with Dr. Charlotte? She looked like she was about to collapse at any minute...

Fritz asks while looking at Charlotte going out of the venue.

– That's because she hasn't slept in a few days, so she went to sleep.

– Hahaha, still, how should I say it... it looks serious, right...? Her health may collapse, and... Mei Mei who takes care of her, was left in Little Garden.

– So that's how it is, huh?

When such a conversation was done, Claire and the rest returned.

– And, are you enjoying the friendly reunion?

– You might say so.

Hayato gave a bitter smile to Claire who had spoken to him.

It was because of the beginning with Judal. That's what Claire thought. She sighed a little and said.

– I stabbed a nail to my older brother so as to not mention unnecessary things from now on shitawa. If you have not received any injuries, then that is also good desu.

With this, the members of team battle of Little Garden are gathered. Looking at them, Krovahn and the rest were eating deliciously food greedily.

Of course they didn't talk to anyone, but they seem to enjoy the food.

– Well then, for a while I——

When the situation finally settled, when Hayato was about to try

to get away from this place in order to find Karen and Sakura.

– Hey, Fritz!

It was the voice of Latia that was raised while she was pulling the sleeve of Fritz.

– ...what is it, what happened so suddenly?

– Look over there, that guy!

Her eyes were directed towards a big body, it was a Slayer of the Rasiya Empire wearing a red uniform.

It was the man who bumped with Latia in the city. Also around him, there are people wearing the same red uniform.

Hayato's line of sight overlapped with one of them.

Then the man approached to where Hayato and the rest where.

It's a man with red hair and a high stature, with white transparent skin. It's not in front of Hayato that the young man stopped his feet. It's in front of Claire.

– Nice to meet you, Miss Claire, representative of Little Garden. I would like to ask you about the rumor of moments ago.

– ...and you are?

– I am the captain belonging to the Rasiya army, and the captain of the team battle of Rasiya for the < < World Martial Arts Tournament > >, my name is Cezary Gravin. I am pleased to make your acquaintance from now on——

Saying that, Cezary thanked her politely.

It's a Slayer and it's said that he is the captain, but it's quite a thin line man. Furthermore, he's expressing a smiling face. Hostility can't be felt from that appearance.

– Claire responds politely to such Cezary.

– Nice to meet you. As you said, I am Claire Harvey, the representative of Little Garden. Is it fine if I call you Captain Cezary?



– Yes, of course.

Claire grasped tightly the hand presented by Cezary.

A tie.

A prove of friendship. A handshake.

Immediately after that——

In a complete change, the expression of Cezary became severe.

– So what is going on...I am asking to Miss Claire about what I heard, and that is, that a Slayer of our country, and a Slayer of Little Garden caused problems before this friendly reunion began.

– ...a problem? And who would be desuno?

Claire narrows her eyes and turn them towards Hayato and company. Claire confirmed, looking at Latia who quickly diverted her sight.

– Latia, was that you desunone...?

– You are wrong! I just, picked a fight, or rather, how to say it...

– That is not a valid explanation wayo...

Claire sighed heavily.

– Anyway, please calmly tell the situation to me.

– Well, that, I suddenly bumped with someone, and because of that, the ring I received from Fritz...

Feeling despondent in that situation, Latia began to talk. Suddenly, Cezary spoke.

– Miss Claire, please wait a moment.

– ...what is it desuno?

– This girl is not in the wrong. That is a sure thing. Let me call the person concerned here.

That said, Cezary turned his eyes towards the place where he was before.

– Gert, come here.

– ...chi, why me?

Called by Cezary, the man in question called Gert gets closer reluctantly.

– My apologies, he—— is Gert Abramovic, he is an excellent Slayer, but there is nothing that can be done with his rough temper. Apparently you had a quarrel with the lady over there. Gert, apologize to Miss Claire.

Cezary said, while Latia denoted a sidelong glance. But Gert wasn't obedient and didn't apologize.

– Why do I have to do such a.... To begin with, the one who's to blame is *dat* stupid brat who stood up abruptly!

– Wha, it is already decided that you are the guilty though!

Claire seems to have grasped the general idea, looking at Latia objecting Gert. She sighs heavily, and continued her words.

– In short, the quarrel took shape of something like that desuwane.

– Yes, I heard that the deployment of armament was mutual.

– ...good grief. Did you not remember me saying that battles or duels between Slayers others than in a situation of emergency are prohibited desuno?

– B, but we didn't get to fight. We just deployed our armaments.

– That is just a frivolous objection desuwayo. In any case, there is no doubt that they have acted problematically with each other. Besides, both parties are to blame masu. Let's settle this case by apologizing properly to each other.

- If Miss Claire says so, then that will also be helpful.
- Do as you were told, Latia Saint-Émillion. Apologize.
- Wh- why do I have to apologize to...
- Listen up, apologize properly, 'kay? Otherwise, the qualification to perform in the tournament will be revoked, you know.
- Ugh... I understand.

Fritz told her so, and Latia apologized with a facial expression that didn't seem to be convincing.

- ...I'm sorry.
- Gert, you too.

While clicking his tongue with a *chi*, Gert apologizes too.

- Yeah yeah, I'm sorry I'm sorry.

It's not an apology filled with heart, but that's also applied to Latia.

However, it's important that they have apologized even if is merely for form's sake.

- You will have another encounter, in a match of the tournament□□. If you win and advance to the next round, then you can met along the way. Don't you think so desuwane?

In regards to the words of Claire, Latia and Gert nodded. Far from looking in the eyes, they averted their sight.

- Anyway, it seems that the formed root of trouble has disappeared. Then I am assuming that there are no more problems in here. Well then, see you□□

Cezary said so and smiled with a grin, then returned with Gert to the other Slayers of Rasiya.

- ...somehow those people feel strange.

Cezary and Gert——

It's Nesat that muttered so while seeing their backs.

– A strange feeling desuno?

Nesat nodded in regards to Claire who tilted her head in puzzlement.

– Do you get it Hayato? The strange feeling?

– No, I don't get it...

– I see...

Nesat hung her head with disappointment.

– What is that strange feeling, can you mention the feeling in detail desuno?

– ...It's difficult. But, it's odd... moreover, it's a bad feeling...

– ...I see desuno...

Nesat's answer was inconclusive, but it seems that she felt something. However, neither Hayato nor Claire felt anything.

It seems to be the same for the other Slayers. That's why, Nesat was the only one looking alternatively the figures of the back of Cezary and Gert, while Hayato and company only could stand still, dumbfounded on that spot.

– ...Anyway, there is no doubt that they need special attention desuwane.

– I agree.

Hayato nods to the words of Claire who broke the silence.

–

Nesat was still looking at their backs, gently uncovering the eye behind the eye patch, staring at them as if she was looking for

something.

Chapter 3: Opening Ceremony / Single matches / Oath of Touka

– As expected, there are a lot of people...

The main stadium on Calbrera Island is the largest in the world, with more than five times the area of the one settled in Little Garden.

As a result, the number of people gathered in front of the stadium is not a laughing matter. Among them, the detail concerning the Slayers—it's not an exaggeration to say that some of those people are Slayer maniacs.

– Oh! Aren't those the uniforms of Little Garden who are said to be the winners this time?

Descending from the private bus, the voice that said something like that jumps into the ears of Hayato and the others heading to the entrance of authorized people.

– We seem to be the favorites, isn't it?

Saying that, Fritz smiled.

– But, we aren't drawing the attention, rather it's the Prez, right?

– Well, that may be so.

From the other side separated by a rope, fans of both sexes mixed in are calling on her.

Claire raised her hand to respond their voices, moving her feet to the authorized people entrance with a smiling face.

Shortly afterwards, Hayato and co. entered from the participant entrance into the stadium.

The other side is a special observation space dedicated to team battles.

It's in the upper part of the audience seats, and it exists so as to surround the entire stadium.

Seats are assigned by teams, and it's divided from the battle space with a tempered glass barrier, it's a very nice place to see.

– Once the visitors enter, this will be very crowded.

Latia muttered while looking the battlefield and the audience seats by turns.

– Surely that seems so.

It was Fritz who showed consent.

At any rate, this stadium boasts more than twenty times the capacity of any arena in Little Garden, and the battlefield has about three times its capacity.

There, the stage for the show of Sakura and Karen is completed. The opening ceremony will start after the concert of the two.

– We can see the concert from here, isn't it?

– Yes, just like you said.

Erika answered the question of Hayato.

– However, we will have to descend to the first floor immediately after the *Live* has ended. And then together with the Slayers of the other countries and organizations, we will follow the lead to the entrance of the battlefield. And according to the opening speech of Judal-sama, the curtains of the tournament will rise.

Incidentally, Touka, Shuemei and the others who are registered for individual matches, are supposed to see the concert in the authorized people space that's in a corner of the audience seats.

It seems that they are going to enter together at the opening

ceremony and are supposed to merge with the rest after the end of the *Live*.

– There are around thirty minutes to start the show yet. Hayato, shall we go get something to drink?

That came from the right from where he sat. Emilia, sitting in the seat next to Hayato called him out.

– I can't, I have a place where I need to go for a bit.

– Is that, perhaps the place of your sister?

[Don't bring Emilia along. You absolutely must come alone]

It's something like that.

Of course, Emilia isn't supposed to know that.

– That being the case, it's fine if I go with you?

Emilia said so as she always does.

– Well, that's...

At that time, Hayato was troubled. *What do I do?*

– Emilia-sama!

A voice reverberated in the authorized people space.

It belongs to the Slayer, member of the Army of Britannia, Claudia Lowetti.

She rushes directly to the location of Emilia. Then she took Emilia's hands and continued her words.

– Emilia-sama! The Slayers of Britannia who could not participate in the party yesterday said that they would like to greet you without fail. So please, go to meet them.

– Huuh...? Why should I do such a thing...?

– Emilia-sama is the princess of the country and is a hero who tore off the plot of the minister, the traitor that tried to take over the country. As a result, there are a lot of people who would like to meet you, and want to hear a word from you.

– Well, about why I left home, it's because there was a discussion of a plot which was an arrangement of engagement——

– That is fine, so please come this way. I must bring Emilia-hime just like Kilfelthar-sama ordered me to!

– Even If you say such a thing... wha, Claudia!?

Claudia grips Emilia's arm, and pulled her.

– Emilia-sama, please!

– Hey, Claudia! Don't drag me! My arm will come out!

– I will not stop, Emilia-sama must come no matter what you say!

Fritz who was watching the arguing going back and forth, whispered at Hayato's ear.

– Hayato, now this is your chance.

– Ah! Gotcha...

Hayato answers with a bitter smile. It was just a bad time for Emilia.

Hayato stealthily left behind the special watching space.

– Sakura, Karen, can I come in?

– Of course.

When Hayato knocked on the door with a *TON* *TON*, the voice of Sakura returned from inside.

When Hayato opened the door, a magnificent room was before

his eyes, and it was considerable spacious. Rising from one of the chairs, Karen raises her voice.

– Nii-san, you came!

– Hayato-kun, you came alone as promised, I'm happy!

Sakura, who stood up from the chair in the same way, started to move faster than Karen, hugging Hayato's body. Surprised by such action of Sakura, Karen shouts.

– Sakura-san, why are you hugging my Nii-san so suddenly!?

– ...because, that meddlesome good for nothing is always following him. But today it isn't like that, so this was long-awaited.

Turning her head, Sakura looks back to Karen elated with success, with a complacent smile showing on her face.

– Bu, but but, but Sakura-san is overdoing it!

That said, Karen approached Sakura and Hayato and tried to separate the two from each other with both hands.



– ...hee, Karen-chan. I got used to doing it. But, Hayato's heart is already madly in love with me. Right, Hayato-kun?

While saying that, Sakura further strengthens both arms that have turned around the head of Hayato.

– No, that didn't happen.... Besides, this is a bad teaching to Karen, so step away.

– Che, so cold huh...

Despite revealing her frustration, Sakura separates herself from Hayato.

– By the way, I have a thing that I want to ask to you two...

He could hardly talk to them at yesterday's party.

Because of that, he couldn't tell them what he was planning to ask.

– ...n? What is it? The person that I love? The answer is Hayato-kun!

– I, I also love my Nii-san!

– No, why should be that? What I want to ask to you girls is the thing you told about me in a magazine.

Hayato then began talking to them about what happened yesterday. It was that a boy asked for a signature.

– Hee, there was such a thing. Hayato-kun is like an Idol, isn't it?

While laughing with a *Ahaha*, Sakura strikes the arm of Hayato with a *PAN* *PAN*.

– You, I guess you are making fun of me...

– That's not true. By the way, we talked about Hayato-kun in the magazine. About how the elder brother of Karen-chan is a Slayer. And also, the story of our encounter.

– I am sorry, I thought that we should have properly took permission of Nii-san...

Karen was hanging her head in an honest apologetic way. Looking at her attitude, she may cry at any time. Looking at that

figure, Hayato hurriedly patted her head.

– No, you aren't wrong. After all Sakura said nothing necessary, right?

– You understand it properly. As expected of Hayato-kun. You know everything about me!

– Perhaps you thought that I said so...

Seeming to be in the right, Hayato sighed in an unpleasant way.

– Well, being real names or staged names, there is a limit about how much you can hide, am I right? Even Hayato-kun appeared in the CM of this tournament, and if you have an active role in this tournament, then you'll definitely get more attention.

– No, that's...

That may be true. This tournament is drawing attention to that extent.

– I think that it would be better if you expose yourself a little, rather than make them inquire into weird things. Therefore, signing things are like a pre-training. Besides, Karen-chan is going to draw more attention from now on, so even if you disagree, Hayato will be noticed as her elder brother. That is the resolution of the family of a celebrity. Moreover, you will definitely get more attention when you marry me, so be preparing yourself for it.

– Ma, marriage you say!!

Karen gave a loud voice like jumping. Her eyes are rounded and her face is dyed in red.

– I never knew that Nii-san and Sakura-san were going into that direction... Nii-san, is that true?

– ...to be honest, Karen-chan. Yesterday we both met in secret after the social gathering, and we did ardent things all night long.

– Eh...? Eeh? Ni, Nii-san, what do- do- do-do-do-do does that...

– Karen, calm down. It's a joke from Sakura.

– Yes, a joke, it's a joke.

Sakura laughs with *Ahahah*

– Is it really a joke?

– But what if I'm not joking?

– Th, that's...

– Sakura, stop playing with Karen-chan.

Saying that being exasperated, Souffle, the manager of Sakura and Karen, appeared from the back of the room.

– Oh, Souffle-san. You were here.

– Correct, and I beg for your pardon, Hayato-kun. In order to divert Karen's tension, I asked Sakura to have a good time with her.

– ...eh? Tension?

– Well, that's how it is. Karen-chan is still a new singer and she still has some ways to go, though she has surpassed the hurdle called the year-end song program. There weren't that much of experiences so far, so there's a wide difference compared to me in terms of mental strain before a *Live*. But, it was a lot easier, right?

– Uhh... now that you mention it, I got nervous once again...

Karen who says so is quivering and her legs are shaking.

– It can't be helped, right?

– Ah...!

Hayato opened Karen's forelock with one hand and kissed her forehead.

It's like just before New Year's Eve——

Ever since she took off from Little Garden to appear on a music program.

– ...Have you calmed down with this?

– Yes!

Karen smiles happily.

Sakura, looking at him, hit Hayato's shoulder with a *POM*
POM, spreads her forehead and put up her hair.

– Hayato-kun, me too, me too. If Hayato-kun doesn't kiss me in the forehead, I won't be able to stand on the stage.

– You don't have to say something like that...

Looking at Sakura who speaks like a spoiled child, Hayato muttered a little exasperated.

– After all, even I can get nervous. Besides this is *service, service*. This can cheer me up. If Hayato-kun doesn't kiss me in the forehead, then I wonder if I should kiss him in the cheek.

– No, stop it! Karen, help me!

Stopping Sakura who is approaching to kiss his cheek with both hands, Hayato asked Karen for help.

When their eyes met, she grasped tightly the fists with both hands, the figure of Karen trembles shortly and repeatedly.

– Th, that... Sa, Sakura-san, if it's her, it can't be helped. We will be in trouble if she doesn't stand on the stage... Besides, if it's just a kiss...

– You heard it. Come on, Hayato-kun. Pretty please.

Sakura opens her forehead.

– Okay okay, I got it...

It can't be helped if that's said by Karen.

Hayato kissed Sakura's forehead.

– Is this fine?

– Ehehe, yes ♪.

Sakura's smile at that time was very cute.

It was such a thing that made Hayato's heart to beat with a *DOKUN*.

–

– Nii-san?

– Hmm? Yes, what is it?

– Were you enchanted by Sakura-san just now?

– No, of course not.

– He was absolutely fascinated.

Looking fixedly at Karen with his eyes half-opened, Hayato spontaneously missed her line of sight. Then, he heard a sound of two hands striking each other with a *PAN* *PAN.

– Well, it's time to move to the wing of the stage now that both of you got your tension released.

– Well then, see you later. Hayato-kun, look forward to our songs. And thank you for the kiss!

After throwing a kiss, Sakura goes to the corridor that leads to the stage. Thereupon, she called out to Karen.

– Let's go Karen-chan. Our <<Universe>> *Future* is connected to our <<Battlefield>> *Stage*, yes——?

– Yes!

After answering to Sakura, Karen looked at Hayato and said.

– Nii-san, Karen will do her best.

Hayato who came out of the waiting room of Sakura and Karen immediately returned to the special watching space.

The concert hasn't started yet, but there's only one thing that it's different from some time ago. The ceiling of the stadium was closed for the realization of the concert. By the way, for today's concert, the two of them are supposed to sing a total of 5 songs. But only one song will be performed by those two.

Sakura sings a song and then is replaced by Karen. Then after Karen sing a song, it's programmed that each one sing 2 songs.

With the announcement telling the beginning of the opening ceremony, the illumination in the venue disappeared and total darkness arrived.

Excited cheering arises due to the flowing melody.

The beginning of the ceremony event.

The concert of < <Oriental Maiden Princess> > *Oriental Wizard* Kirishima Sakura and < <Little Garden's Small Witch> > *Little Little Witch* Kisaragi Karen has started.

– I also thought of this at the time of New Year's Eve, that Karen-san is already a wonderful songstress desuwane.

Claire said while clapping her hands after Karen finished singing.

– The President was also looking at that program?

– Yes, I was watching it wayo. It was really splendid desu.

– Err, that kind of...

– Why is Hayato being bashful?

– Because...

Looking at Hayato scratching his head, laughter leaked from the surroundings.

– If Prez praises them that much, then it's almost certain than those two will have the first humankind's live performance on the moon.

When Fritz said so, Claire instantly said.

– That is correct desuwayo. In the first place, the existence of a singer who is also a Slayer, at the present time there are only two of them in the world——

– That means that if you want to see the concert of them directly with your own eyes, you have to make it to the top in team battles in order to go the moon.

– You might say that it is like that masuwane.

Claire answers Latia's muttering.

– If it's the case, we only have to get the first place. Hayato, do you want to go together with Karen-chan to the moon, isn't it?

– Yeah——

At the same time he nodded, Hayato remembered.

Come to think of it, Karen said that the new songs to sing at the end are songs where humankind aims for the universe——.

The lights go out there, and the venue turns black once again. A short time later, something emerges from the stage.

It's a rocket waiting for the moment to be launched.

It's an illusion created by Sakura's Hundred < < Fairy Spinning Story > > *Fairy Fairy Tale*.

The figures of Sakura and Karen can be seen along with who are watching the situation.

10, 9, 8——

Sakura and Karen start the countdown.

– Everyone, let's do it together!

Encouraged by Sakura, the spectators gathered their voices.

7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1——

The rocket is lifted off.

At the same time the song started, Sakura and Karen also flew towards the space. A rocket going towards the moon while separating from the fuel tank. While using the stage, called the stadium in three dimensions, both Sakura and Karen go to the moon in the same way as the rocket. Then, the song ended at the same time they landed on the moon.

Then the two of them started singing another song. The debut song of the two of them as a duo.

The appearance is in the future. It looked like the figure of the two doing a concert on the moon. As the song is over, begins the event of the opening ceremony. The live performance of Kirishima Sakura and Kisaragi Karen ends.

The ground where Sakura and Karen are sinks as they wave their hands to the excited cheering of the audience seats.

The ceiling of the stadium opens, and the light of the sun came into the audience seats and the battlefield all at once.

– Okay, we must be moving soon masuwayo.

Hayato and the others who are the Slayers of Little Garden got up in response to Claire's words and together with the Slayers of another countries left the room, and started walking towards the passage leading to the battlefield.

– Ah! It's the President.... And everyone.

Hayato and company arrived at the wing of the battlefield, and suddenly a voice rang.

It's Noah. And she isn't alone.

There, not only are the Slayers of Little Garden who participate in single match like Shuumei, Alphonse and Touka, but also the Slayers of foreign countries who are waiting at the entrance.

– You, that appearance...

Saying that, Hayato pointed a trembling finger to Touka. She wasn't wearing her regular kendo uniform, but wearing the uniform of middle school of Little Garden.

– Now that I'm participating in single matches as one of the members of Little Garden, I was told by President-dono to wear this at the opening ceremony to not feel out of place. ...say, why are you surprised by this?

– Well, it's just that, it's kind of unusual to see you wearing a uniform...

– Is it that strange...? I wear uniform as usual, even when I'm employed.

That said, Touka pouted her lips.

– Is that so? Now that you mention it, I'm not that impressed by seeing you in that appearance.

– I've been constantly training with Emilia-san these days. Certainly I don't remember wearing this uniform in front of Shinshishō. ...but, why do you feel so shy, saying something like that...?

– No, what kind of things are saying...?

COUGH, Claire is the one who cleared her throat.

– You guys, came along to when it is your turn to enter wayo. Stop with the idle talk. Let's be puffed up with pride, and enter dignified.

Led by the President, Hayato and the others stepped into the battlefield with the guidance of the staff.

At that moment, the moans, cheers and noises that could be heard non-stop until now, reached the point where those wrapped around the whole venue. It's such a great cheer that made them have goosebumps.

– This is like something stupidly incredible, isn't it...?

Fritz responds to Shuemei who is perplexed and gazes at the spectator's seat.

– We are getting attention for being of Little Garden, no more than that. Like Hayato, yesterday he was suddenly asked for an autograph.

– Eh! Is that so!?

Following the surprised Shuemei, Alphonse said.

– Hayato is amazing, right? Perhaps that fan came because of the CM?

– Please, let's stop with that conversation.

To supplement Hayato who said so, Emilia answers.

– That boy was the child that was in the Zwei Islands when we sorted out a long time ago.

– Aah, I see. In other words, Hayato is really a hero. But I'm envious. I don't have any fans...

– Alphonse, if you play an active role in single matches, then you will have a lot of female fans, you might become popular.

– You are right, if that's the case, then it's no good if I don't do

my best!

It seems that he took seriously the frivolous talk of Fritz. Alphonse clenched his fists in front of his chest.

– You guys, refrain to whisper.

Turning her head, Liddy told them being disgusted.

– I'm sorry.

– I'm sorry.

Fritz and Alphonse, sank into silence with those words of reflection all together.

As soon as the entrance of the Slayers was over, it was announced that the opening declaration by Judal Harvey will be held. Next, in the center of the space in front of Hayato's and company's line up, a cylindrical pedestal and a table with a microphone appear from the ground.

Standing on that, waving his hand to the loud cheering audience is one of the organizers of this event—it's Judal Harvey, that will declare the opening.

Although the contents he talks is arranged for general audience, it's almost the same as last nights' party. Speaking of what was added is: if Savage appeared during the competition, then each of the countries that have Slayers who aren't going to participate in team battles or in singles matches will collaborate with it, positioning them all around the world, so if it's an invasion from the space, then it's possible to deal with it.

If mid-sized or large-sized Savage attacks occurred, they are ready to suspend the tournament and take countermeasures and so continue the tournament on a regular basis.

Soon, they would like to raise the <<World Martial Arts Tournament>> to be a competition equivalent to the Olympics and the World Cup.

Of course, he didn't say something like declaring the victory for Little Garden or Warslan.

– Well then, to end my words, I pray for the success of the Slayers who will participate in the tournament. From here, the first < <World Martial Arts Tournament> > raises the curtain!

With those words, fireworks soar into the sky, one after another.

Thus, the < <World Martial Arts Tournament> > began.

After the opening ceremony is over and they have finished leaving the battlefield.

Unlike the Slayers who participate in single matches preliminaries which were supposed to receive guidance on the go, Hayato and the others who are members of team battles, returned to the seats for authorized people to watch the spectacle.

– Oh! It's an email.

Hayato took out the PDA from the pocket and checks it. The other party is Touka.

[Soon we will come out from our preparations. Please come to the waiting room in a few minutes]

That was the content of the mail. The number of the waiting room is also written there.

– Well then, shall we go to the waiting room?

– Yeah.

Hayato stands up together with Emilia. Claire asked them there.

– Where are you going masuno?

– We are going to see off to the members who are participating in single matches. Touka told me that she will call me when their

preparations have ended.

– I see. Then in that case, then I will accompany you too masuwa.

– ...eh? The President too?

Hayato said, surprised.

– It is my job as the President to see the Slayers of Little Garden off desuno. Besides, I heard that the Slayers of Yamato who fought together with Little Garden have the same waiting room masu. And, there is also a person who I want to meet in there masushine.

– Is that, perhaps...?

– Yes, the same girl you are about to ask. Well then, let's go.

And so Hayato, Emilia and Clare, the three of them, headed to the room to wait for the girls, the ones who were sent out as Slayers to participate in the preliminary contest.

– It's here desuwane.

They arrived in front of the room with the number taught beforehand from Touka.

The door of the room was written not only the name of the Slayers of Little Garden, but also the names of the Slayers of Yamato as Claire had said.

Kirikagure Yumina, Tsudzura Mirai and Kurumi Sango, the ones who fought with Hayato during the *Third Attack*.

– We are coming in.

Announcing that, Hayato handled the door knob and opened it.

– ...eh?

And Noah raised her voice. In that instant. The atmosphere inside the room freezes.

– Um...

– Hayato...san?

It was Shuemei who gave a perplexed voice.

At that moment, the face of Hayato rapidly lose its color. Not only mentioning the three members of Yamato, but also all the girls participating in single matches, that includes Touka, Shuemei and Noah were in the middle of changing clothes from their uniforms to their Variable Suits.

Noah, Yumina, Touka and Shuemei dyed their face red and rapidly hid them with the Variable Suits that they had in their hands. Sango who was taking off her skirt is petrified on the spot.

Mirai gave a lively voice [Arara〜] with a slightly enjoyment looking in underwear both up and down.

– Hayato, you mustn't see!

Hayato's sight was closed by Emilia who has stretched her hands from behind.

– Hey, you are touching me from behind!

– This is not the time to say such things! I must take you out from the room for the time being!

Hayato was pulled out from the entrance of the room by Emilia. It was Claire that made an appearance inside the room to make sure of it.

– Everyone, I am truly sorry deshitawa. Please call us out when you finish changing your clothes.

Looking at Claire that said so, Sango showed a surprised expression. In a hurry she shouts.

– Cl, Claire-sama!

Claire is admired by Sango. For that reason, she gave out her

voice unintentionally.

Claire smiled when she saw that figure.

– Let's talk again later.

Saying that, she closed the door.

– ...Hey, what that of situation was that for Hayato? It was a lucky one? Or it was a terrible one?

– Err, no matter what I say...

Claire sighed greatly, looking at Hayato and Emilia who are doing such interaction.

– Claire-sama, we finished changing our clothes.

Noah opened the door from the inside and made her appearance. And just like that, the girl left the door open. Claire entered first, and then Hayato and Emilia stepped into the room.

Just as Noah said, everyone had finished changing their clothes to Variable Suit. Although sitting chairs and benches are also provided, unlike Sakura's and Karen's waiting room, this gives the feeling of being a locker room for changing clothes. The wide might not be more than ten tatamis.

– Look, Sango. Hurry hurry.

It was Mirai that said so. She is trying to push the back of Sango to take her to the place where Claire is.

– St, stop, Mirai!

Sango has her face bright red while refusing. To start with, she is facing Claire, the one she admires.

Her behavior seems to say that that she isn't ready yet. Nevertheless, Mirai won't go easy on her.

– Come on, salute her, salute her.

In the end, Mirai's hand made Sango to arrive in front of Claire.

– Eh, umm... that...

Sango can't look in the eyes to Claire. She kept looking down and her face is deep red.

Mirai mutters in her ear.

– But then again, I won't be something like an intermediary. Don't you have something to say?

– So noisy desuwayo! Mirai, be quite for a while!

Screaming and keeping her distance with Mirai, Sango faced Claire.

– U... umm... this, I, I am, Kurumi Sango, I am a member of Motomatsu Base, the Yamato branch of Warslan company...

Claire, seeing Sango who kept her head looking down, her face bright red and put together her words with difficulty, smiles sweetly and lent her a hand.

– Sango-san, I do know things about you masuwayo.

– ...eh? Claire-sama knows something about me?

– Yes, at the time of the *Third Attack*, I heard that you fought along with Kisaragi Hayato and your increase in your deeds of arms masu. You seem to have a magnificent ability, even though you are only 14 years old desuwane.

– ...those things, about me...

– You do not need to be humble. Take pride of your own strength.

– Th, that... thank you very much!

Sango bowed her head vigorously. Then, once again she continued her words.

– Then, that.... I, I admire Claire-sama and aimed to be a Slayer.... In the future, I will definitely enroll in Little Garden so I can be helpful to Claire-sama...

– Let's talk about that after this competition has ended.

Claire put her hands on the head of Sango. And smiled gently to Sango who raised her face.

– For now, give your best to get through the preliminary contest.

– Ye, yes!

– The time is approaching, let's get moving.

This stadium isn't the venue for the preliminaries for single matches.

It's at the south of Calbrera Island——

It's supposed to be done in a field created in the forest that hasn't yet been developed.

– Do your best, ok!?

– Yes!

Touka nods, and Hayato caresses her head.

Thus, the three people of Yamato, together with Shuemei, Noah and Touka went towards the bus station to board the bus of exclusive use for participants heading to the venue of the preliminary contest.

– I hope everyone can pass through the preliminaries.

– I hope so too.

Regarding Emilia, Hayato nods.

...though, there's no doubt that it's going to be a tough fight. Even by just watching the data of a few people, the Slayers who are participating in single matches, it can immediately be seen that they

are not going to be easy contenders. In the *Third Attack*, fighting against the Savage, there were some of them who slaughtered many of them alone.

– That reminds me, I could not find his figure wane.

– Aah!

– Come to think of it.

In response to Claire's words, Emilia and Hayato spontaneously looked at their faces.

It is a round body that flew through their minds. Maybe he hasn't finished changing his clothes and hasn't returned yet.

– Oh, everyone〜.

Along with the sound of *STOMP* *STOMP*, the round young man comes near.

It's Alphonse Brewstadt who has changed into his Variable Suit. Next to him, the figure of *Silver Blitz*, the Tamer type Hundred can be seen.

– What about Noah and Shuemei?

At the same time he arrived to Hayato and company, Alphonse asked.

– They already headed to the bus stop wayo.

– Eeee——!?

Alphonse who heard Claire's reply showed surprise by jumping.

– Does that mean that I was left behind?

– It does not mean that it was like that masuwane.

– That's.... How much has passed since everyone headed to the bus stop?

- I guess that it was only two, three minutes ago desuwayo.
- If that's the case, then I can reach them. Thank you, President.

Saying that, Alphonse called out to *Silver Blitz*.

- Let's go, *Silver Blitz*! We must run after everyone!
- Woof!

Alphonse, along with *Silver Blitz*, run to the bus stop. While staring at his back, Claire sighed astonished.

- How to say it, there is no tension at all wane...
- Well, being free from tension is a good thing, don't you think?

While smiling wryly, Hayato makes a follow-up without a moment's delay.

- I also think the same as Hayato.
- Certainly, that has some truth masuwane.

Claire slipped out a smile, and continued her words.

– Then, let's pray for everyone to have a good fight and that they will come back safe and sound. We should move to the watching space masuwayo.

The number of Slayers participating in single matches is around 400 people——

All of them will be divided into 12 groups that will fight.

A *battle royal* with near 30 people. The survival is harsh and only one person will win and proceed to the tournament.

Good luck? Or bad luck?

The results of the raffle is that Yumina, Sango, Mirai, and——

Touka, Shuemei, Noah and Alphonse, everyone were placed in different groups.

Although the acquaintances, the comrades of Hayato and the others don't fight around one spot, they can't cooperate until it becomes two people in the end.

– Uu, I gave up...

Two hours after the start of the preliminaries. It was Shuemei in group B who was the first ahead of everyone who came back to the lobby prepared for the tournament staff, were Hayato and company have watched the preliminary contest of single matches en masse.

She has already changed her clothes from Variable Suit to the uniform of the Martial Arts Department of Little Garden, got closer to Hayato and everyone, while dropping her shoulders.

It was Emilia who spoke comforting words to such Shuemei.

– But, you defeated both, and only 10 people were remaining. I think you did well.

– I think so too.

– ...really?

Hayato said so, and Shuemei's face looked happy.

– Yeah—in that state, I guess you had no choice but to give up, and as Emilia said, I think you did well until that time.

At any rate, a gun was pointing from behind.

She couldn't do anything in that state, not even to deploy a barrier. There is no mistake to say that it could have been a serious injury if she moved badly.

– Uhh, certainly I had a good feeling that I could move well at the beginning, but then I saw that the movements of my opponents were strong. So, there were places that I thought that maybe I...

– That is because you are striving on your everyday training desuwayo.

– Ah, Claire-sama...

In regard to Shuemei who showed a surprised look by suddenly calling out her name, Claire said that while smiling gently, like rewarding her for the efforts.

– Good work, Ryuu Shuemei. Not only you, but also Noah Sheldon and Alphonse Brewstadt are incredibly powerful compared to the beginning. In Little Garden where excellent Slayers gather, it may seem for you that you are an inferior one, but that fact it is not so anymore for all the Slayers, did you not understand it well by participating in single matches?

– Ah...!

In other words, this was the goal of Claire.

It seems that Shuemei went along properly with it.

– Thank you very much, Claire-sama. Making the best use of this experience, it will encourage my training even more from now on.

– Yes, if you do that, then there is a meaning to have you participate in the preliminary contest.

Claire answered while expressing a sweet smile.

– ...then, on that subject, what are the results for Noah and Alphonse-kun...? Alphonse-kun was certainly on the next group after me, didn't he?

– Yeah, he ran from place to place, he luckily knocked out his opponent, and he remained approximately the same as Shuemei-san but, *Silver Blitz* was equivalent to a stray bullet and it disappeared. So, he gave up. Noah-san has just finished now, she also did a good fight but dropped her sword and give up.

– Oh, is that so...?

Feeling bad, Shuemei drops her shoulders. Listening to Claire's story, it was probably because she had fleeting expectations that someone could break through.

– By the way, I also lose too.

While saying that, it was Mirai that approached the location of Hayato and the others from the direction that Shuemei came back.

Behind her is Sango too.

Sango is sighing with a gloomy expression in contrast to Mirai whose attitude is nonchalantly as always. In comparison to Shuemei, she was considerably depressed.

– But, both of you fought bravely, don't you think? Sango-san ended when there were only 3 people remaining.

– Hey, Sango. You've been praised by Emilia-san, no?

Mirai follows so, but Sango's expression doesn't clear up.

– ...but, it is the same if I lose desuwayo.

She muttered with a small voice without coming from the back.

Looking at the situation, Claire sighed a little. She probably noticed that Sango is glancing repeatedly towards her from a while ago.

– It is not the same even if you lose wayo.

While Claire says so, she approaches to Sango.

– Ah...!

– Your battle was amazing deshitawa. I can't imagine that you are a middle school student desu.

– That's, I am...

Furthermore, Sango hides behind Mirai. Seeing that figure, Claire sighs with a "Good grief!"

– Don't be humble wayo. If you continue to train yourself further and study hard in Little Garden, you should be able to become even more stronger——

– Eh... Claire-sama, that is...

In a flash, the eyes of Sango opened wide.

– Yes, if you want next year, wouldn't you come to Little Garden?

– Cl, Claire-sama.... Is that, true...?

– Of course, it is very true desuwa. I, Claire Harvey, the representative of Little Garden, will scout Kurumi Sango to the Martial Arts Department of the senior high school masuwa.

When Sango heard those words, her facial expression went bright with a *Paaaa*, and jumped out from behind the back of Mirai, hugging Claire's waist.

– Claire-sama, I... I.... uwaaaaan!

– I'm glad for you, Sango.

Looking at Sango who is loudly crying, Mirai smiles with a friendly grin.

– Ah! I'll take a picture because this is interesting.

PASHARI, and Mirai took a photography of the figure of Sango crying and hugging Claire's waist.

It seems that Sango didn't notice it. Claire told to Mirai while smiling wryly looking at the condition.

– Umm, what about you Mirai-san? Do you want to come together?

– You mean, that you are scouting me to Little Garden, right?

– Exactly desuwa. Your ability is equally as good as Sango desu. Certainly, if you come to Little Garden, that will be of great help

masuwa.

– Yeah, thank you for your proposition. That’s right... it’s fun to be with Sango so, I think that I’ll do that.

– Yes, without fail.

Claire smiled satisfied when she heard the reply of acceptance.

– Oh, it ‘s almost time for the preliminaries of group J.

It was Emilia who raised her voice.

– Group J, huh...

– Yumina’s group, yes?

Sango and Mirai said so one after another and turned their eyes on the monitor.

Thereupon, the figure of Yumina is displayed right there. Her weapon is sickle and chain——

It’s < <Male Giant Serpent> > *Orochimaru*, an Arsenal type Hundred.

Immediately after the start of the game, Yumina knocks down safely one, two, three Slayers. But then the rests cuts around 10 people. She is alone against two Long Shooter type, and a Slayer armed with a Dragoon type——

She was surrounded by a total of 3 Slayers.

As far as can be seen by the clothes of the three people, there seems to be no relationship between them. They probably judged that she was a dangerous character by knocking out 3 Slayers.

The two Long Shooter type Slayers shot 10 beams towards Yumina. She dodges them by jumping, but there is a Dragoon type floating battery following her.

However, Yumina could take countermeasures. Throwing the

weight attached to the sickle and chain, she wrapped it around a tree, and moved towards there.

To the side of that place there is a Slayer of the Long Shooter type.

– ...sorry.

Yumina used her hand like a sword, swinging it down from behind, stunning the Slayer. There, a shot of another Slayer of the Long Shooter type got near, but Yumina presents one hand against it and stop it with an E barrier.

Of course, that beam is a decoy to distract her from another attack. Yumina was aware that it was nothing but a diversion.

The Slayer of the Dragoon type was saving energy in his gun and was aiming for her.

Without a moment's delay Yumina throws the weight. She saw before her eyes that the chains are coiled around the leg of the Long Shooter type who fired the shot a while ago, making his body to roll around as it is.

Using the body like a hammer, she struck the Slayer of the Dragoon type that was aiming for her and was ready to shoot with a gun in the air.

Because of that impact, it seems that both fainted. Their armaments are cancelled. And safely after that, Yumina defeated two Slayers. Then the buzzer sounded close to the ground in the field.

[The winner of J Block is Kirikagure Yumina]

Along with the announcement, Yumina's image is displayed on a huge monitor. It showed that she had won the preliminary contest.

– As expected of Yumina-han.

– Yeah, she is amazing desuwa.

Mirai and Sango were rejoicing because of her. On the other hand, Hayato stared still at the huge monitor. Karen asks to Hayato about it.

– Nii-san, what's the matter?

– Well, it's just that the next is Touka's turn...

Of course he is happy that Yumina won. But he was worried about Touka.

– Oh, it seems that Touka's preliminary contest is about to begin.

Due to the words of Latia, Hayato looks once again to the huge monitor.

– Oh, it's Touka!

At the same time as the figure of Touka is displayed, Sakura raised her voice.

Touka stretches her body in a big way.

Emilia said, looking at that figure.

– Hayato, do you think that Touka-chan is going to win?

– Hmm.... Even if I declare that.... There's no doubt she is going to win, but I don't know the ability of her opponents. I can't be certain of it since this is a *battle royal*... Anyway, it would be the best if she doesn't get hurt.

– That reply, is typical of Hayato.

– You think so?

Hayato replied to that.

– ...I guess so, if you see the data being registered, the skill of the Slayers of group K doesn't appear to be so high, so I think that Touka-kun's chances of winning are high.

It was Charlotte that approached to Hayato and the others to

where they were, butting into the conversation.

– Huh? Charo? Are you free now?

– Watching the match is also my job, you know. I'm hoping to investigate the usability of the equipment deployed for the preliminary contest. Besides, the Slayers of Little Garden are using the Hundred that I have developed and adjusted. It would be natural to cheer for them, don't you think?

In response to Emilia's doubts, Charlotte continued talking.

– ...now, returning to the conversation, Touka-kun, who has the fighting ability comparable to that of the members of team battles, I think that she should be able to come out from this group K's preliminaries, unless there isn't much to do. She also has the special characteristic to not receive attacks of *energy*.

– I certainly think that it is a big factor when it comes to a melee battle.

However, Hayato had only one concern. It seems that Emilia noticed it, although it was emerging from his facial expression.

– What's wrong, Hayato? Why do you have a stiff expression?

– No, actually...

Being that the preamble, Hayato started to talk.

– Kendō is basically a one-on-one match. I'm concerned about whether she is accustomed to fight with many people at the same time.

– Now that you mention it, in the beginning, Hayato was also struggling with that kind of training.

– Yeah, that happened.

It's somehow hard to drift away from it, since he has been fighting for years concentrating only on the opponent in front of him, eliminating any presence and sounds from the surroundings.

A bombardment from a place that is a little far way, a member who evaded the attack of its opponent and then hit it, it was harsh.

– If so, there's no problem.

That said, Shuemei continues.

– Touka-san also did that kind of training.

– Eh? Is that so?

– Yes. She trained with us. Rather, our numbers weren't sufficient so we invited Touka-san. I think that point won't be a problem.

– I see, then...

Limited to the match they watched from her, Shuemei didn't seem to be bothered by the fight between a large number of people, compared to other Slayers.

The words of Shuemei were that much persuasive.

– Oh! It seems that the preliminaries for the Block K will begin.

At the same time Emilia said so, the bell for the beginning of the game rang.

Each one of them had a round mark attached with a number, and several of them were indicated in the monitor in front of their eyes. The round lights with the number indicated started to move. That shows the location of each Slayer. They started to move at once.

– What number is Touka?

– She should be the number 21.

Emilia replied to Hayato's doubt.

– It seems that she hasn't entered any battles so far.

Shuemei said that, following. But Latia denies that immediately.

– No, number 11 and number 12 are coming closer.

– Oh, Hayato, look at the screen over there!

Doing as Emilia told him, he looked at the monitor pointed out by her finger, the image of two women Slayers was displayed there. The appearance of Touka can be seen beyond that.

– Out of the blue two people are her opponents... it looks like it will be a tough fight.

– Yeah...

Hayato nods in regard to what Emilia muttered. Besides, those two people look like they are mirrored. Both of them have small knives in both hands. Speaking about differences, there is a white muffler knotted that was concealing the half of their faces. It's divided into right and left.

Just looking at the light armor that gives the impression of being easy to move, and that muffler, they seem to be Slayers of the Assassin type specialized in assassination.

– What the, why is your Variable Suit so weird?

– That's not an armor... what? Is that the national costume of Yamato or something?

They ask Touka.

– National costume.... Well, you might say so.

Answering, Touka continues.

– But I can say that you are twins, huh?

“”Yeah, that's right!””

Their voices overlapped, and attacked Touka at the same time.

There, Touka closed her eyes.

(Catching them with both of my eyes, I won't be able to catch up with them and I'll get confused. That's why in a situation like this, I

must see with my heart!)

That is the conclusion Touka put out during training.

(——they come!)

Touka stopped the knife swung down from above with her sword and flips the body of her opponent with her arms as it is.

– Wha....!?

The surprised voice was given by the girl who was the other part of the party that was chasing after her.

Touka kept her body horizontally without a change and evaded the attack, then she swung the sword towards the gap, the back of her body, the moment she landed on the ground.

– Guah...

That flash indicated the victory. The girl who fell to the ground from the front cancelled her armament.

– You, how dare you, to my sister!

The girl that was the other half rushed on once again with rage. But that single person wasn't enough to become an opponent of Touka.

Catching the knife that was swung down for a second time with the sword, she destroyed her posture in a flash. With a blow resembling a flow, Touka slashed her opponent.

– Such a... even though we were especially from the same team, if we had won...

The other girl says that while collapsing.

– ...this is a battlefield. So please forgive me.

Touka bowed to the girl who fainted and whose armament was cancelled.

Emilia who was in the watching space gives a cheerful voice, looking at that picture.

– She did it, Touka-chan beat them!

But Latia was calm.

– Touka is being targeted...

– Eh?

Latia's words are fixed motionlessly at the map.

So Hayato and the rest noticed that there was a female Slayer of the Shooter type near her, ready with a rifle leveled towards Touka. Immediately afterwards, the shot is released and hits the back of the head of Touka.

– ...n? By any chance, was I being aimed just now?

Touka turns around.

There, was a girl holding a gun with both hands. It's a woman with a red waving hair.

The girl is trembling and looks frightened.

– What was that...? I'm sure I just hit you now...right?

But Touka doesn't answer that. On the contrary, she was with indignation of suddenly being shot.

– You are aware that there are no manners in a surprise attack. I hate that type of guys!

Touka who kicked the ground vigorously, readied her sword and ran after the position of the girl.

– Kuh!

The flustered girl fired shots consecutively. But the result is the same. The attacks of *energy* don't affect Touka. At the same time they hit her body, the shots disappear.

– That... kind of...

Two shots, three shots, it's the same. Touka who came until a distance with her opponent by erasing the third beam, stroke with her sword the top of the shoulder of the dumbfounded girl.

– Guah....

There was no such a thing like room for the girl to deploy a barrier. The girl attacked by Touka screams and falls to her knees. The moment she fell to the ground, the armament is cancelled. Just like Charlotte said at the beginning, perhaps it's true that she was blessed with that combination. After that Touka survived without struggling, she defeated the last one, and broke through the preliminaries of group K.

Around thirty minutes after the match of Touka was over.

Touka's voice echoed to Hayato and the others who continued watching the matches.

– ——Shinshishō〜

Hayato was taken aback due to that voice, and turned his line of sight to the direction from where he heard it. Then, he saw the figure of Touka who finished changing clothes to the uniform of middle school of Little Garden from her kendo uniform rushing over in a half run.

– Shinshishō I, made it through the preliminary contest!

Catching the body of Touka who jumped at him, Hayato patted her head.

– Yeah, I watched it properly. You did it well, you know?

– Thank you.

Rising her face and looking at the face of Hayato, Touka smiled sweetly. While sullenly looking at that scene, Emilia said.

– ...it is good that you have passed the preliminaries but, about your special characteristic that makes you unable to receive *energy* attacks, you should have kept it hidden until the finals of the tournament.

– Hahaha, I also told her that. Even though it was only one blow, everyone thought that it was strange that there was absolutely no damage after receiving that one.

Yumina said after Emilia, who came back on the same bus as Touka. Unlike Touka who rushed over, she slowly walks to Hayato and co.

Then, two young girls ran up to Yumina and embraced vigorously her waist.

– Yumina-san, congratulations!

– Congratulations masuwa!

– Mirai... Sango——

Looking at the face of Sango, Yumina smiled feeling relieved.

– ...Sango, I'm relieved that you are more energetic than I expected.

– ...? Why are you saying that desuno?

Sango tilts her head, raising one of her eyebrows.

– When I knew your result, I thought that you were shocked when you showed an unattractive part of you in front of Claire-sama.

– Oh! That kind of thing.

Hearing the words of Yumina, it was Mirai who showed a grinning smile.

– She did exactly what Yumina said, though. Claire-sama said [You did it well mashitawa. In case you wish for it, it will be of

great help if you come to Little Garden next year masu] so that's why her mood is better now.

– Wha, Mirai... you, don't say unnecessary things!

– But, it's the truth, isn't it?

– Yes, it is but!

– Hahaha. Anyway, I'm glad that what you wished for came true, Sango.

– We, well, that is something natural for me desuwa...

Mirai stroked gently the head of Yumina, who hanged her head with a bright red face.

– By the way, like Sango, I was invited too.

– I see.... Since you two will go to Little Garden, I'll be a little lonely. Nonetheless, I'm happy that the efforts my pupils did by themselves were recognized.

Saying that, Yumina patted Mirai's head.

– If you diligently study in Little Garden, then you will overtake me quickly. If you are in the next tournament, not only you will have enough power to participate in single matches, but also in team battles. That's why you have to do your best. Of course, I will not be beaten in terms of practice.

On that night, a victory celebration was held to congratulate Touka and Yumina who broke through the preliminaries. The next day they are free——

The day after that, Touka is going to appear in the first round of single matches of the finals of the tournament.

Single match of the finals of the tournament, round 1.

Just before Touka's match starts.

– Yo, Hayato. How was your cute disciple?

Authorized person and member participant of team battles——Fritz asked Hayato who came back to the special watching space where besides them, only the organizers of the tournament are allowed to enter. Following Hayato, Karen, Sakura and Emilia also came back to the special watching space. Four people were visiting the waiting room to greet Touka before the match.

– Well, I can say she was sufficiently motivated.

Following Hayato who answered, Emilia said.

– She wasn't feeling nervous, and her mood was the same, so she should fight just like always.

– Really? If so, then she'll surely win.

– ...I hope so.

In response to Latia who told that convinced, Hayato sat on the chair.

Emilia and the others also took a seat.

– Great, the entrance hasn't started yet.

It's the monitor of the stadium that Emilia's line of sight is pointed at while muttering so.

There is already a picture of Touka and her opponent.

It's a Slayer of Al-Salaam whose age doesn't differ from Hayato and the rest. Dark brown skin, her eyes are sharp. And she looks pretty strong.

Next, Hayato directed his eyes towards the battlefield. There, the stage that was at the time of the concert is no more. A ring was now prepared there.

– Hmm, it's wide as expected, huh...

Compared with the battlefield of the stadium in Little Garden, the area is nearly twice of that.

Since this ring is also used for the final round of the team competition, it has been made assuming that battles will be between lots of people.

By the way, the final rounds of individual matches are the same as the < < Campus Martial Arts Competition > > being held in Little Garden. All are done in a one-on-one battle.

The rules are to some degree the same. Those are: when the armament is cancelled, when the numerical values of the Vital Ring placed in the arm fell into the critical zone, and with a KO by knocking down for 10 ten seconds.

What's different is that there's an area outside of it. Falling outside the ring will result in a KO if more than 10 seconds have elapsed. You only need to be careful about it.

– Oh, it looks like the match will start.

The announcement resounds at the stadium.

Touka comes first.

– It appears that she is really not nervous, isn't it?

Fritz said, looking at Touka that appeared in the stadium with her usual kendo uniform from the wing of the battlefield.

– ...you think? Touka-chan was sufficiently motivated so...

Sakura puffed with pride as if she was boasting her own child. Then, the opponent, a Slayer, came in. The Slayer of Al-Salaam is a woman. Her height is high, and her limbs are long.

Looking at her figure, Karen mutters.

– She is a very high person.

– She seems to be around 170 cm.

Emilia answered.

The PDA confirms the personal data of Larke Mandola who is the opponent of Touka.

Looking at that figure, Latia asked.

– She is strong, right?

– Well, honestly, reaction values are not that important, but it looks like she has been fighting using her Hundred since she was young, and she seems to be blessed with physical ability, and her combat skill seems to be fairly high. It's written in her personal data that she finished off two Savage in the *Third Attack*. However...

– ...however?

– The shape of her armament is a Chevalier type, so her weapon is a sword. Then, undoubtedly Touka-chan won't lose.

– I see, so that's the reason. If that's the case she will win anyway.

Emilia and Latia.

There are reasons for them to be convinced about Touka's victory. Touka has already fought with various types of Slayers in trainings, sham battles and in the Martial Arts Tournament of Little Garden.

As a result, this < <World Martial Arts Tournament> >, even including the individual matches preliminaries, she has almost never lost against sword users.

That goes for Krovahn too, he did a fair match for the best 16.

Touka and Larke deployed their Hundred together.

Touka has a black sword. Larke's weapon is a curved edge sword type.

– Uu, I'm getting nervous...

It's Karen who muttered visibly trembling.

Looking at the them at a fixed distance, they picked up their weapons, and put together their hands in front of their chest like praying.

– It's okay, Touka will surely win. Hayato-kun also said that so...

Sakura says so, and praying like Karen, she joined together her hands in front of her chest, her body was trembling.

This is not a game at all. That's why, as the tension wraps around Hayato and his surroundings, the buzzer reverberated, starting the match at the stadium.

Touka's the one that started first.

Almost at the same time when the buzzer ended to ring, she kicked the ring, rushing vigorously at her opponent.

– Haaaaa!!

Touka swung the sword and released a sharp slash. However, the slash is easily dodged.

Her opponent is a warrior who went through the preliminary contest.

It won't be easy to settle the match. On the contrary, Larke has unleashed counterattacks. She stops the blows of Touka's sword, repelling them.

Two people who keep a fierce sword fight in the center of the battlefield. But among them, Larke is the one who stood up with superiority.

– Hya!

In the middle of the sword fight, Touka scooped up with her own feet.

Because of that, Touka lost the balance of her body.

– It's a shame, but this is the end!

She swung downward the sword while showing a smile confident of victory.

Although it was thought that there is nothing more that can be done, Touka uses one leg attached to the ground like a coil and jumps, and rotates while twisting her body.

Latia shouted.

. That is...!

– Kenzaki Style New Technique—— < < Cutting Revolution > >
*Senkaizan!**

***TN: Formed with the kanji 旋回斬**

It's Karen that answered.

Touka had learned some new techniques for this tournament.

For that purpose, she received an old Tablet PC from Karen, she taught her how to use it, she made video calls with her former master Ryūsei, approaching him for consultation.

– It has been decided.

Emilia muttered so.

That's not something that can be done so trivial, that is, to slash the opponent while somersaulting.

Larke who was attacked in her unguarded moment by a perfect attack that used an unimaginable physical ability, her body, due to the direct hit was sent flying bouncing at the very limit off the premises.

– Somehow or other, that's what it looks like.

Hayato answered, looking at Larke Mandola collapsed, and her

armament cancelled.

The buzzer resounds at the venue, informing the end of the match.

On the huge monitor, the portrait photo of Kenzaki Touka, and the characters indicating her victory were displayed.

– She did it!

– Yes, Touka-san did it!

Sakura and Karen stand up, and share the joy embracing each other.

A KO victory in 1 minute 50 seconds. That was the result of Kenzaki Touka in the first round of the finals of the tournament.

– Good job, Touka. It was a nice match.

Hayato welcomed Touka who returned to the waiting room after the end of the first round.

– Thank you very much, Shinshishō. But this time I was blessed with my opponent. Whether the next will turn out well like this or not...

– The next match is tomorrow, right?

– Yes.

Touka nods and answers to Emilia who asked.

– I see... Umm, the next opponent seems to be a Slayer of Rasiya... huh...?

The finger of Emilia that was touching the PDA stopped. Hayato instinctively asked.

– Is something wrong?

– Look at this.

Hayato, who picked up the PDA that Emilia had handed over, looked at the screen and became speechless.

– Eh? This is...

– Isn't he the muscle guy of that time!?

It was Latia who peered into the PDA from the back of Hayato and gave a voice. She keeps speaking without a change.

– Why is he in individual matches? Wasn't he going to be in team battles?

That muscle daruma*——

Before the friendly reunion, Latia had a dispute with a Slayer from the Empire of Rasiya——Gert Abramovic.

– ...I don't know. However, there is no doubt that Touka's next rival is that guy. Hayato, the video of his first fight, has already gone up?

– Yeah, it seems that it's up.

By saying that, Hayato watched the video that Emilia and the others had looked into.

It was the side of the Martial Arts type Hundred < <Hell's Gate> > *Val Beck*, being worn by Gert Abramovic, who went for an offensive movement at the same time the match started.

Instantly approaching his opponent, a Slayer of Romalia, he kicked up his body high in the sky. However, the armament of the Slayer of Romalia is a Dragoon type.

He immediately straightens himself in the air using the propulsion device on his back and tries to attack with the floating batteries to Gert. However, Gert wasn't there already. He kicked the ground and jumped high going after the Slayer of Romalia. Gert then joined his arms together, and swung them downward around

the cervical vertebrae of the neck.

Romalia's Slayer fainted with the shock, apparently. Without taking a safety fall, he hit the ground. Because of that, his armament is released, and the match is over.

– ...amazing, a KO that took less than 30 seconds.... That attitude of him wasn't just a mere show.

Emilia muttered. Hayato has also the same impression. Even though he was wearing a thick armor, apart from the power of the attacks that are unleashed from his large body, those movements of him were also quick.

There, a rumor came with the resounded voice of a man.

– Oh, so in the spot over there is the opponent for the second round, huuh?

– !

Everyone looked back all together, and there was the figure of Gert Abramovic, who changed clothes from the Variable Suit to the military uniform of Rasiya Empire.

Cezary who is the captain of the Rasiya team, and Elena, a woman Slayer, are standing as if holding him between.

– ...Gert, you understand it, right?

It seems that he doesn't like to say too many things.

With a calm voice, Cezary gives a warning to Gert.

– ...I know. Nonetheless even if *she's* from Little Garden, there's nothing *dat* can be don' if that brat opponent picks a fight.

– Gert, if you know that, then a foul mouth is no good.

– Yeah yeah.

Elena also gives him a warning, and Gert drew back his neck like

playing the fool, with the palms of both of his hands towards the ceiling.

The three of them passed by next to Hayato and co.

Hayato thought that it would be fine to not do anything at all.

But it didn't act in accordance to that...

Immediately after passing by Hayato and the others's side.

Gert stopped his legs and turned over.

– ...lady-chan, one advice.

– Gert!

Elena restrains him by roughening her voice. However, Gert doesn't stop.

– It'll be something very small, so its fine, don't ya think? It's an ordinary advice. Besides, I won't do anythin'.

Gert continues his words while showing a smile and grinning.

– Lady-chan, if *u* don't want to get hurt then withdrawal. I *ain't* interested in bullyin' a brat.

It's evident that it's an act of provocation.

But, Touka wasn't agitated.

– ...lady, huh.

Touka replied, staring at Gert.

– I'll not withdrawal. I don't have the intention to lose!

– Hahaa, hahahaha! You heard that, Cezary. She'll defeat me, yo!

– Gert, your playing is going too far.

– Chi, fine. But, a few words to end——

Gert received a warning again from Cezary, and after saying so, he released again a few words towards Touka.

– If *u* do it, then I won't go easy on *ya*. I'll break *da* fightin' spirit of you and Little Garden. That's all——

Together with Cezary and Elena, Gert tries to turn his back on her.

It was Latia who called him out there.

– ——Hey, wait a minute.

Those words made Gert to stop his feet and looked back.

– Huh, what is it? *U* are the chibi* of that time, what *da* heck do *u* want?

– I have something to ask you.

– ...what do *u* want to ask, huh?

Gert furrowed his glabella*.

***TN: area between the eyebrows.**

– Why are you in individual matches? Wasn't your intention to appear in team battles?

– Ooh, *dat* thing. Don't listen to worthless thrash. Of course I'll appear——

Gert continues his words while showing a grinning face.

– Just coz' I'm going to compete in team battles, there's no rule that won't allow me to come out in individual matches, don't ya think? Appearin' in individual matches, it's to show off *da* strength of Rasiya and I. Besides, this is a good warm-up.

After listening to that answer, Latia had an expression of being taken aback.

– ...because of that alone, are you really coming out in individual

battles? If you do such a thing and get injured or use too much energy, that will have an impact on team battles, isn't it?

– Hahaha, impact? As if individual battles could have some kind of impact on me.

Gert laughs loudly.

Looking at that figure, Latia questions with a meek expression.

– In short, you believe that you can win individual battles without using a lot of power...?

– Precisely.

Gert immediately replies.

– ...you guys, also think the same?

Latia asks that to Cezary and Elena.

– Well, I guess so.

It was Cezary that answered.

– It will be an honor for Rasiya to have an overall victory in both team competitions and individual matches.

Following, Elena answers.

– ...I thought that coming out in individual matches will allow him to cool off his attitude a little.... But it seems that our plan went off, huh...

– Hahahaha.

When he heard the answer of Elena, Gert laughed holding one of his sides.

– Well, although the opponent is a small fry, it'll be a good exercise, no?

In brief, they don't doubt about their victory and they probably

think that it won't be difficult either.

– This is all what you have to say? In which case, if you excuse us.

When Cezary said so, the other two showed their backs to Hayato and company and disappeared in the inner part of the passage.

It's at the same time that their figures disappeared.

– I'll tell you what...

It was Emilia that began to talk.

– Those guys, they sure are underestimating other Slayers, isn't it? Honestly, he doesn't seem to be that much of a great Slayer or anything...

– I agree with that.

Latia immediately indicated agreement.

– Limited to his personal data and the fight of the first round, he is certainly a Slayer in his own way. But, I don't think that it goes that far——. When we were facing each other in that situation with our armaments deployed, I didn't feel his power to that extent.

– ...but still, it's not that he's exposing all of his abilities and I think that it's dangerous to make a decision so far, right?

Listening the words of Fritz who butted into the conversation, Hayato remembers.

Nesat said that they felt strange, when she saw Cezary and Gert.

(...then, perhaps it's related to a hidden power of them, I wonder?)

If it happens to be that, then what on earth could it be?

– But, if he is hiding his strength, then Touka-chan is the same, I guess.

It was Emilia who said that.

– Well, I still haven't used my secret techniques.

– Yeah, now that you mention it.

In response to Emilia's words, Latia nods.

It became public that Touka had a constitution that doesn't receive the effect of *energy* and some of her techniques have been used in the preliminary contest. However, she didn't use Kenzaki Style Secret Technique *Zaneizan*.

– ...Touka, are you okay?

It was Hayato who asked Touka calling her out.

It's because her body was trembling in short and continuous movements.

– Yes—— I'm okay. I'm trembling with excitement.

He knows that those words were a lie. Still, she continued to pretend to be tough.

She grasped tightly her fist, and continued her words.

– To taste the finest victory, you have to defeat the toughest opponent, for sure. I've been practicing without a break for several months to win the individual matches. Therefore, Shinshishō, and everyone. Please watch my fight tomorrow. I will definitely win——

Chapter 4: Touka and Gert / Variant / Breaking in

Early afternoon of the next day.

Around fifteen minutes before the match of Kenzaki Touka and Gert Abramovic begins.

Hayato, Emilia, Karen and Sakura were arriving in front of the room where Touka is waiting, just like yesterday.

TON *TON*, knocking the door in front of him, Hayato asks.

– Can we come in?

– Yeah, come in.

What came back was not Touka, but Charlotte's voice. Maybe she has been doing maintenance to Touka's weapon, the sword. Hayato opened the door and steps into the room together with three people.

– Hey, Kirigakure-san broke through the second round.

– Oh! Is that true!? As expected from Yumina-san!

When Hayato calls her out to motivate her with rough words, Touka got up from the chair she was sitting, and raised a delightful voice. She has already changed clothes to the custom-made kendo uniform.

As far as they can see, preparations seem to be in place already.

– I must do my best in order to advance to the third round too.

Saying that, Touka suddenly clenched her fists.

– ...what is it? Are you feeling nervous?

Hayato asked because Touka's body was constantly shaking.

– Yeah, a bit...

Touka answers frankly.

– Is that so?

Hayato gently smiled.

Unlike the preliminaries and the first round, it was a common thing that the opponent is known to be a formidable enemy. However, there's no way she will fight properly in such a state.

– For the time being, sit down in the chair one more time.

– Um, I understand.

Hayato told Touka to sit once again in the chair. Then, Hayato went around behind Touka and reached out her shoulders.

– Look, this will calm you down.

– Hyan!

At the same time that he starts to rub her shoulders. Touka's body trembled with a flutter and expressed a seductive voice.

– He, hey... don't make a strange voice so suddenly!

– That's because Shinshishō is the one to blame. Suddenly touching my body to do weird things——

– To do weird things you say...Ha, Hayato's an ecchi! What kind of things did you do!?

– No, I thought about calming down her anxiety, so I just massaged her shoulders as everyone does. After all you saw it, right?

– Fuun... but didn't seem that the massage was kind of lewd?

– No, nothing like that! Look, look!

Trying to convince Emilia who turns her eyes of skepticism, Hayato starts to massage Touka's shoulders again.

– ...look, what do you think? In this way your body that became stiff will relax a lot and you will calm down.

– Ye, yeah.... Certainly, I can sense that kind of thing...

– If so, I'm glad.

Answering, Hayato looked at the direction of Emilia.

– Look, you just went were seething with anger because of a massage done like this. But it's a normal one, right? The problem was because I suddenly massaged her.

– ...but... nuu... nonetheless, this is a little embarrassing...

– Hey! The hands of Hayato are ecchi after all! Massage my shoulders afterwards. To confirm it!

– What in the world are you saying...

Charlotte laughed loudly, looking at the interaction of Emilia and Hayato.

– Hahaha, Touka-kun seems to be quite sensitive, huh?

– Muu... is that so?

Probably she wasn't aware of that about herself. Touka tilts her head wondering about that.

– Yeah, very much. But, it was good since it looks like her anxiety has come apart, isn't it?

– Yeah, now that you mention it, it's true.

Being told that by Charlotte, it was there that she noticed it.

Touka got up from the chair and bowed her head towards Hayato.

– Thank you very much, Shinshishō!

Then, the time for preparation for the entrance has just arrived. An official came to guide her until the end of the field.

– Okay then, we are going back.

– We'll be rooting for you on the top.

– Yes, I'll fight to not disgrace Shinshishō's—— nor Kenzaki Style's nor Little Gardens' name, and I'll seize the victory with these hands!

Touka declared that to Hayato and the others who are leaving the room.

When Touka showed up in the *Coliseum*, her opponent Gert Abramovic was already waiting in the center.

Gert, dressed in his Variable Suit, glance at Touka while raising his lips to shoot words to provoke her.

– Coming late, huh, I thought that you ran away.

– Is there a reason for me to run away? I'm going to win! No matter——

「 Well then, please deploy your respective armaments 」

Obeying the transmitted announcement, Touka grasps tightly her black Hundred and shouts.

– *HUNDRED ON!*

The Hundred grasped tightly in her right hand changes and ends transforming into a black sword.

Subsequently, Gert who grasped tightly the Hundred in his right hand, flipped it with his fingers towards the air.

– *Hundred On*

Armor appears on his arms and legs. It's a Hundred of the Martial

Arts type, *Val Beck*.

– A small fry from Little Garden said that it's going to defeat me. That makes me laugh. I'll make you realize the difference in strength...!

Gert takes a stance to attack Touka from the distance.

– You wished for it!

Touka also moved her feet forwards and readied her sword.

The countdown starts.

– Touka-san is going to win, right?

Karen muttered next to Hayato.

Next to her, it's Sakura who answered.

– Yeah, she will absolutely win. She can't lose to such a guy.

But that voice, was trembling with nervousness.

Hayato and the others, as well as every one of the Slayers of Little Garden that are present in the special watching space are equally nervous.

Hayato gulped his saliva when the countdown was on 3.

「 Well then, let the match begin 」

At the same time as the count becomes zero. The announcement echoes with a buzzer. It was Gert who moved first.

Kicking the field, spreads his arms like a bear and attacks Touka.

– Your body, I'll twist it and crush it!

In order to capture Touka, Gert swung down his arms, crossing them.

Touka evaded it with a back step, and pulled the arm that was

holding her sword, launching a thrust.

– That’s...

Looking at Touka’s thrust, Hayato screams instinctively.

– That was *Zaneizan*, isn’t it?

The one who said it. Was Emilia.

If ordinary people see that, it would have looked like a single thrust.

But, Touka released two thrusts in an instant.

– With that skill, the impact received is twice the normal thrust——no, it must be more than that.

Continuing, Charlotte said that.

If the individual receiving a direct hit is an ordinary human, it may end up down on the spot. There’s the possibility of penetrating even an E barrier.

But——

Even though he was sent flying to the back, Gert never fell.

He used both arms on the verge of receiving the thrust, and took a defensive posture. Of course, he also deployed a shield, an E barrier.

– I thought that you were just a simple stupid brat, but that was splendid.

Loosening his lips and smiling, Gert said.

– The pain of now wasn’t so bad!

– ...!

Gert kicked the ground, screaming and approaching Touka while soaring up a cloud of dust.

– Uoooooooooooooooooh!

The rock-like fist of Gert is going to hit Touka. The attack is somewhat large, but that attack is full of gaps.

Touka made a jump and dodge it, and turned around behind Gert. To that back full of gaps, Touka begins to attack.

However, Gert suddenly opened his fists and placed both hands on the ground.

Rotating his body around them as a fulcrum, he kicked the body of Touka who was trying to launch an attack from the side.

– Guah!

Kicking her side, Touka's body flies backwards.

After floating around the air for about a second, Touka's body hit on the battlefield, rolling almost at the very limits of being out of the ring.

However, it hasn't become a fatal wound. While rolling over the pursuit of Gert's knee, Touka stands up.

Even there, Gert continues attacking, but Touka continued to dodge, watching for an unguarded moment. But, it was hard to make a gap.

She couldn't find the timing to attack.

(Oh right, I'll do that!)

The moment she was doing kumite* for the purpose of < <World Martial Arts Tournament > >.

***TN: 組み手, paired karate kata.**

She received a technique from Latia, her opponent. She thought that it might be usable for some reason, so she practiced and mastered it.

– Here I go!

Touka points the tip of the sword to the ground.

– What on earth is she...?

Hayato at the audience seats seems to be perplexed seeing for first time the action of Touka. At his side, Latia shouts.

– That’s the skill that we worked out together!

Touka shouts while pushing the sword to the ground.

– Kenzaki Style New Technique < < Mole Flash > > *Doryuusen!*

What she did was the same as *Zaneizan*.

Twice in an instant.

Touka stroke the ground with the tip of the sword. Then, going like a mole, swelled the ground while rolling up a cloud of dust.

– Tsk!

Gert dodged that by jumping sideways.

Of course, that’s how it’s supposed to go.

Touka has already kicked the ground. A great advantage of this technique is that an intense cloud of dust rolls up and takes away the field of vision of the opponent.

Understanding that, she can go ahead. Touka jumped after kicking the ground with a *TON*, inside the cloud of dust she somersaults, and while spinning like a tire, she plunges towards Gert.

– Kenzaki Style New Technique < < Beheading Whirlwind > > !

– Guah!

Her sword sent flying the body of Gert.

– She did it!

It was Karen that shouted.

– Nii-san, Touka-san did it!

Gert's body, which received Touka's sword in the nape of his neck, was made to slide on the ground, sending it flying to the corner of the arena.

– What's wrong, Hayato? Touka-chan did it, right?

Sakura asked because, unlike Karen, Hayato froze, he was dumbfounded.

– Well, it's like that but still...

Hayato was on the evasive.

Looking at that figure, she said.

– If Hayato-kun doesn't do it, then I'll explain it to you.

– ...Charlotte-san?

– The neck of a human isn't strong. If you receive such an attack, it wouldn't be strange for the cervical spine to break and thus, to die.

– Eh? That's...

The color of bewilderment spreads on the expression of Sakura who heard the explanation of Charlotte.

Karen's the same. Noticing it, the facial expressions of most the spectators were similar.

All the spectators are noising from the commotion.

The conclusion came in the worst form.

Everyone had thought of that possibility.

However——

– It appears that the match hasn't ended yet.

– Huh?

Hayato, looking to the battle space with the words of Krovahn, noticed that Gert gets out from the soaring cloud of dust.

Heading to the other side, Touka breaths heavily as her shoulders go up and down.

– Run, Touka!

Hayato screams spontaneously. However, his voice doesn't reach Touka.

Touka noticed Gert approaching, and that his right hand was drawing near the base of her neck. The big hand of Gert catches the neck of Touka, and lifts her body.

– Guh, guguah...

The breathing is being obstructed. The sword slips off from the hand of Touka and made a clattering sound, as she raises an anguished voice.

– And? Are ya going to give up?

Gert interrogates Touka while looking at her, lifted high. It was a matter of course to do so.

However, Touka didn't seem to do it.

The flame of her purpose hasn't disappeared from her eyes.

– Not yet...!

Touka kicked Gert's head. Her foot hits his chin. Gert's neck bounces backwards, but she couldn't give any damage. Gert returned his neck to its natural position, and said while smiling with a grin

– If that's the case, I'll make it easy.

Immediately after Gert started to move his arm, Touka's body is thrown to the ground vigorously. A crater was made, with her body as the center.

Touka who's worn out at the center of that, fell trying to curl up her body.

1, 2, 3——

The count starts.

If she can't get up within ten seconds, Touka's defeat will be decided.

– What is the current status of Kanzaki Touka?

It was Claire who raised her voice at the audience seats. She was feeling fear of Touka's physical safety. Erika answered the question.

– The Vital does not reach the critical section yet, just barely at the very limit. There seems to be a slight sense of consciousness.

– Rather, it may be better to lose this way...

It's Krovahn that muttered.

– You, what the hell are you saying. Do you want your comrades to lose?

Latia glared at Krovahn, criticizing him. Looking at that figure, Krovahn closed partly his eyes as though he was exasperated.

– What! Didn't you feel it? Nee-chan, you felt it right?

– ...felt it, what?

What on earth is he saying, Latia doesn't know. However, Nesat nodded and continued.

– I felt it. I feel the same as that time, a bad feeling.... That man, I think he is probably the same as us.

– ‘The same’, don’t tell me...

Emilia was taken aback and had her breath taken away.

– Yeah.

Hayato nodded to Emilia who turned her face.

It’s because Hayato understood what Nesat wanted to say.

She is sure about what she is saying.

That he is a Variant.

In addition to that, an artificial Variant——

– Nii-san, Touka san is getting up.

Hayato became surprised with Karen’s shout, and turned his eyes once again to the battlefield.

Touka got up when the count reached 7, and readied the sword she picked up. Her kendo uniform is tattered. Her body is staggering. But Touka doesn’t seem to give up on the match.

And then, she kicked the ground together with the announcement informing the resumption and charged to Gert.

– Haaaaaaa———!

Touka, who approached Gert, swung the sword down.

However, Gert never took a defensive posture.

– Eh...?

– Are you kidding me?

Karen and Sakura in the audience seats doubted their eyes.

That’s because Gert smiled broadly, and took Touka’s sword with just one hand.

– After all, he was one of those, huh...

Hayato muttered with a small voice.

– Hum, in the end that's what it looks like.

Emilia also mutters in a small voice.

Their gazes were aimed at Gert's eyes.

Golden shining eyes——.

That means, a proof that he is a Variant.

Towards the body of Touka whose body has collapsed, Gert released a roundhouse kick.

– Guah!

Touka bounces and falls. Nevertheless, she won't give up. Standing up for the sake to obtain the victory, she set an attack on Gert once again.

– Haaaaaa——!

However, the sword doesn't have a decent power. Touka's sword is stopped with one finger.

Even so Touka didn't abandon hope, she assaulted with her sword a lot of times, but the situation never changed.

No matter how many times she swings her sword, all of them are stopped with a single finger. Eventually Gert pulled his arm and shook off the body of Touka,

– Touka!

Looking at Touka who was blown off around 5 meters, Hayato thought that it might have been better to fall outside the battlefield.

She doesn't need to stand up any longer.

He wants the match to finish before she gets severe injuries. Not

only Hayato, but Sakura and Karen also thought so. And yet, Touka hasn't given up.

Standing up without giving up, she murmurs to persuade herself, and slashes at Gert.

– I won't lose... If I lose in this way, I'll be a disgrace to Kenzaki Style—— and to Little Garden.... Besides, I promised to Shinshishō and the others that I'll absolutely win. That's why, I——

But she couldn't cause damage to Gert. He grabbed and grasped tightly with his hand the sword that was swung down, and kicked off Touka's that has lost her balance mercilessly.

After a few seconds, the body of Touka that floated in the air, hits the ground. He doesn't want to see such a match anymore.

That's why——

– It's enough already, end the match! Stop it!

Instinctively, Hayato shouted.

At the same time, the buzzer stopping the match reverberates in the stadium.

It doesn't mean that Hayato's cry went through.

Touka's Vital value was below the critical range.

– Erika, prepare medical staff at once——

– Understood.

Erika tried to rush out of the watching space after receiving Claire's command.

– What the hell, that guy!

Latia's cry stops Erika's feet.

– Huh...?

Looking back, what was visible to Erika is Gert's appearance which threw the sword he had in his hand and headed to the location of the collapsed Touka. Gert grasped the hair of Touka and lifted her body, and swung his fist in her abdomen.

– Wha...!!

With that action, Hayato's become speechless.

The spectators, as well as the staff, were taken aback.

– Nii-san...!!

Karen who holds Hayato's sleeve had tears in her eyes. Sakura next to her is the same.





She covered her mouth with both hands, and her expression looked like she could cry at any time.

– What the hell that guy, the match is over, you know!

Latia got up with a voice of protest.

– He may not hear you.

Emilia mutters with a trembling voice.

– Why, is that?

Latia stared in wonder.

– Touka-chan's attack of a while ago——< < Beheading Whirlwind > >, it's possible that his eardrums are perforated.
Or——

– Or, what?

– That's...

Emilia turns her eyes down.

By looking at that figure, Hayato could see what she was going to say. It means that the power of the Variant has gone wild. Because of that, Gert can't do simple judgment. And so, Gert hits hard Touka again.

– Damn, at this rate Touka will!

Hayato unintentionally put a hand on the Hundred of his chest.

– Yeah, we can't leave things like this, because we don't know what will happen, right!?

Emilia also lay her hands on the Hundred.

– Don't tell me, are you planning to break in?

Emilia answers Charlotte who asked.

– It has ended, so there shouldn't be any problems. Besides, if we don't break in, Touka-chan's life will be in danger. Prez, and the others know that as well, don't you agree?

– ...certainly, I understand it... but breaking in...

In front of their eyes, there's a thick tempered glass. It won't be

easy to destroy it. There, a voice echoed.

– You have my approval.

– Eh...?

No way, Hayato thinks.

A cleared voice with a feeling of transparency, and that it's familiar. It's the first time he hears it in a few months, but there's no doubt.

Emilia also seems to have recognized who's the owner of that voice.

They find her appearance in front of the door nearby.

— Pope-sama!

Hayato and Emilia raised their voices at the same time.

– It's been a long time, Hayato-san, Emilia-san.

Maruko and Luka——

At the center of the two followers she is hiding her face with a clothing that hangs from her high hat as usual. Nevertheless, Hayato understood that her lips were lightly loosen and that she's smiling.

– Is she a person from < <Holy Church> > Puritaria?

– Yes, she's Pope-sama.

Murmuring close to Claire's ear, Hayato replied.

A voice resounded there.

– Hey there, Pope-sama. You came here already.

– Onii-sama!

Following the shout of Claire, that voice was from Judal Harvey,

the organizer of the tournament. He's accompanied by his bodyguard Neveah, and gets closer to the side of Hayato and the rest.

– Thanks for this, Judal-san. I arrived on this island not long ago. Apart from that, there is something that I want to request to Judal-san from this me.

– Hou, what is it?

– Please allow Hayato-san and Emilia-san to break in.

– Haha, I can't allow that. It's not necessary.

– Wha... Onii-sama, what do you...

– Although one might say that I'm useless, you'll be end up breaking in no matter what. And since Pope-sama has given her authorization, my approval is unnecessary.

Then that means that there's no problem if they break in.

– Since that's the case, please leave all the later processing to us.

The Pope loosens her lips and smiles sweetly.

– Thank you very much.

It was Hayato who spoke with words of gratitude. Liddy shouted at the same time.

– Kisaragi Hayato. Leave it to me.

Liddy was already holding the Hundred in her hand.

– *HUNDRED ON!*

Shouting, < <Jet Black Heavenly Spear> > *Midgard Schrange* appears on her right hand.

– Uoooooooo——!!

Pulling her arm, the point of the spear began to rotate furiously

like a drill and touched the glass that connects with the stadium. Although a barrier for protection is deployed in the glass, the *Midgard Schrange* of Liddy was loaded with energy and break through even that.

– As expected of the Vice-President. It's truly a destructive power.

Fritz whistled with a *Hyyu* looking at the three people that were permitted to jump down through the big hole.

– We are leaving this to you. Go rescue Kenzaki Touka—— our comrade of Little Garden.

— Understood.

Hayato and Emilia answer all together, with their eyes towards the Vice-President.

– Let's go, Hayato.

– Yes.

They shouted together while jumping down through the hole made by Liddy.

— *HUNDRED ON!*

– I will also go masuwa.

Following, Claire screams while jumping down through the hole.

– *HUNDRED ON!*

Hayato has *Hien*.

Emilia has *Arms Shroud*.

Claire has *Alisteron*.

The three of them deployed their armaments and got down to the battlefield one after another.

–?

Gert's line of sight is directed to each of the three Slayers in the battle space.

– The match has already ended! Release Touka!

Immediately after Hayato shouted, he directed the tip of *Hien* to Gert, and another glass was destroyed from the place where Hayato and the other two jumped down.

The Slayers of Rasiya were the ones that jumped from there.

Cezary Gravin and Elena Skalnikore. They haven't deployed their armaments yet. Still, they landed firmly on the ground. That express that they are good at handling *energy*.

– Stop it already, Gert. If you keep doing it, you will be disqualified.

It was Cezary, the representative of Rasiya's Slayer unit who told Gert that. Gert's eyes who received those words returned from the golden color to the original blue.

– ...okay.

Gert released his hand from Touka's hair.

Touka's body falls to the ground. Hayato cancelled his armament and rushed to Touka.

– Hey, are you okay?

– N, nn...

Holding up the body full of wounds in his arms, Hayato calls her out. However, there's no reply from Touka. She only moans with pain.

– A rescue team, fast!

When Claire shouted to the tournament officials who appeared at the entrance of the battle space, a rescue team who had a stretcher immediately came.

Charlotte also comes along.

– There's a relief room assigned to Little Garden in the basement of this stadium. For now, I will carry Touka-kun there, will you also come with us?

– Of course.

Hayato gave an immediate reply.

– I'll also go.

Following, Emilia also answers. She already released her armament.

– I will also go masuwayo.

Claire also released her armament and said so. Placing Touka on the stretcher, she is carried to the relief room. Hayato and the others start to walk making sure to follow them.

And in the middle of that.

Hayato looked back and stared at Gert. He noticed that. And Gert said.

– What is it, are you fired up? Fine by me. I still have a lot of power.

– Kisaragi Hayato, it won't do any good to fall in his provocation.

– I know that.

Calmly answering to Claire, Hayato continues.

– Gert—you, you are appearing in team battles, right?

– That's right.

– If so, it's a match. I won't forgive you. The foes of Touka, I will absolutely destroy them.

Gert received Hayato's words, he smiled with a grin and

answered.

– I'm looking forward to it.

Epilogue

The examination and treatment of Touka carried in the medical facility annexed to the stadium was done immediately by medical staff of Warslan. Speaking of the results of the examination, there's nothing threatening her life for the time being, but because her head was struck strongly, it's necessary to observe her progress—hence, it's necessary for her to be hospitalized in the facility for a while to have a rest. After that, they finished treating her wounds and took her to the hospital room in the medical facility.

An hour and so have passed after the end of the match. Her consciousness hasn't returned yet.

Claire, Charlotte, Hayato, Emilia and Karen are next to her bed, watching over Touka's condition.

– N....

Suddenly, a long breath leaked out from Touka's mouth. Looking at her, Karen raised her voice.

– Nii-san, Touka-san has!

– Ah!

Hayato stands up from the chair to chase Karen and looks into the figure of Touka, who's sleeping facing up on the bed. Then her eyes slowly opened.

– Touka-san!

Karen shouts.

– Touka, are you alright?

Next, Hayato asks.

– Karen... and Shinshishō too.... What place, is this...?

Touka tried to raise her upper body after blinking incessantly. Thereupon, an intense pain attacked her.

– ...kkuh!!

Touka curled up her body with a voice of agony.

– Are you alright, Touka-san!?

In a hurry, Karen calls her out.

Following her, it was Claire who called Touka out gently.

– It would be better for you to lie down once again desuwayo. If you continue being in that kind of posture, it will open the wounds of your body desuwa.

– President-dono.... The wounds of my body you say... huh....?

Following her own body full of bandages, looking at the pure white room and the worried facial expression showed by Hayato and everyone, Touka seems to have finally noticed the situation in which she was placed.

– I see.... I lost to that man and I'm in the hospital...

Touka murmured dropping her shoulders, in a state of feeling despondent.

– Apart from that thing, lay down for the time being. If you really keep doing that, as the president said the wounds will open.

– ...okay.

Doing as told by Hayato, Touka lied down on the bed. She continued her words while tears were floating in the outer corner of her eyes.

– I'm sorry... Shinshishō. I promised I would definitely win but I lost.... What's more, thinking that I could win, I was careless.

Because of that, I caused trouble to you and everyone——

– Don't worry about that. We are glad that you are fine.

That's right, Hayato looks to Emilia, Karen, Claire and Charlotte. Everyone in this place nodded and indicated agreement with a "That's right".

But, it's so frustrating... and pathetic...

Soon, tears float in the eyes of Touka. While stroking her head, Claire called her out.

– ...what are you saying masuno? You really did it well. It is really a wonderful thing to break through the preliminary contest in individual matches being just a middle school student.

– That's right. Besides, your opponent isn't normal.

It's Emilia that said to keep up.

– He isn't normal... you say? What does that mean...?

In response to Emilia's words, Touka instinctively intends to rise her body.

But——

– ...kkuh!!

It seems that the pain has ran through the body just as before. Distorting her expression with a painful look, Touka leant her back in the bed.

– I'm sorry, I unintentionally again...

Touka showed a bitter smile to scoff herself.

There, Charlotte called her out.

– Kenzaki Touka, you still need to rest. Let's postpone this conversation with Hayato-kun and the others. There are some tests that I want to do while your consciousness is awake, so Emilia,

Queen-sama, Hayato and the rest, can you go outside for a moment?

There's no reason for a person to refute the comment of Charlotte. Hayato and the others left the hospital room with satisfactory results of the examination, praying for a quick recovery of Touka.

Hayato and company left the hospital room and are on their way back to the special watching space.

– Umm... Nii-san, is it fine if I go to see my friends? It seems that they are now at the exit B.

Karen asked Hayato. Of course, that has a reason. It was around a while since Touka collapsed and was carried on a stretcher. While running together with Hayato and the others to the medical facility, Karen's PDA received an e-mail from Aoi. She was worried about Touka's condition.

At that time, she couldn't reply because her state wasn't known yet. So when Karen got out of the hospital room, and at the same time Touka awakened safely, Karen e-mailed to Aoi that Touka's life wasn't in danger for the time being.

「I'm glad」

Aoi immediately replied.

Subsequently, e-mails also arrive from Rebecca.

「Karen, what are you going to do after this? If it's fine with you, won't you join us? We are now at the exit B of the stadium」

The exit B of the stadium is located right in the halfway point of the space where the authorized people are allowed to trespass. Surely worried about Touka, Rebecca and Aoi came to that place. Because it's Rebecca, she may have asked a security guard to let them go in.

Karen thought about such a thing and asked Hayato 「 Can I go to the place my friends are telling me? 」

– Yeah, go ahead.

Hayato answered that.

Karen's expression gets brighter in a flash.

– Thank you very much——see you later, Nii-san!

After a short time since Karen started running towards exit B.

When Hayato and co. were walking towards the authorized people's seats, they saw the Pope of Puritaria, Serivia Paul Notre Dame III, walking from the front. As usual she hides her face with a thin cloth hanging from her hat and has two followers on both sides.

– Ara, everyone is going together. Is she all right?

Serivia stopped her feet and said.

Of course, she is talking about Touka. Hayato answered.

– Yes, she regained consciousness. She's going through a complete examination now, but I think she is alright.

– Is that so?

Taking a breath feeling relieved, Serivia continued.

– I am relieved because I was concerned about her too. That is great.

– Yes.

Answering, Hayato bows his head.

– This is also thanks to Serivia-san.

– ...thanks to me?

– Since Serivia-san approved our trespassing, we were able to stop the match before Touka got hurt seriously. Besides, we didn't receive punishment either.

– That is also thanks to Judal-san. ...And, on that subject, that woman is Judal-san's little sister, isn't it?

– I am sorry that my introduction was delayed.

Claire, who looked at Serivia, quickly bowed her head and started to introduce herself.

– I am the representative of Little Garden, Claire Harvey desuwa. Thank you very much for your consideration, as well as my brother, Judal, for your efforts to host this tournament, I really give you my thanks.

– Please raise your head Claire-san. After this I think that I will be indebted to the people of Warslan and Little Garden for the development of the moon base and the like. I hope we can work together.

– Yes, of course desuwa.

Claire who raised her head grasped tightly the right hand that Serivia has presented.



—

At that moment Claire felt a sense of discomfort.

(What was that of now desuno?)

She felt something like a somewhat strong *energy*.

– Did something happen, Claire-san?

– No, it is nothing...

Claire answered in order to mislead her, and separated her hand.

– Which reminds me, Claire-san not only is the leader of the organization but also has a considerable skill as a Slayer, isn't it? That is great.

– I am extremely honored that Pope-sama can say so.

– Ufufu, I am also registering as a team member for the team battles, so in case we have to confront, let's have a good fight.

– ...eh? Pope-sama herself is going to fight?

The surprised Claire was staring in wonder. Hayato and Emilia also have the same reaction. Serivia said, looking at them.

– Why is everyone surprised? After all, Claire-san has just said that she is the representative of Little Garden, correct? So, without a doubt you are going to compete in team battles, yes?

– That is indeed true but, I am only the representative of one organization and, since Serivia-sama is an international leader, and the sponsor of this tournament...

– It is the same. There is no rule for an organizer to not participate as a competitor. Of course, it can't be helped if I get injured, so there is no need to go easy on me. I am going to fight seriously in the matches. Naturally, precisely because I can fight, I am going to appear in the matches.

Loosening her lips and smiling, Serivia said.

– With that said, I am looking forward to the day when I can match against Claire-san's Little Garden.

Together with the two followers, Serivia took her leave from the

front of them. At the same they weren't on sight, Claire said like muttering.

– Kisaragi Hayato, Emilia Hermitt——. Do you know how much ability the Slayers of Pope-sama have?

– Err...

Hayato remembered after being asked by Claire, the moment immediately after when they met with the King of Britannia

The Pope, with a mysterious power, sent flying without touching with her hand the body of Douglas. And that's not all.

That night, she made a way in the air using *sense energy* and intruded through the window the room where Hayato was staying. Although it was a fake, she broke Hayato's *Hien* with one hand.

– I think that maybe they are quite the Slayers.

– ...hmm, I think so too desuwayone.

Claire gazes at the right hand she used to shake hands with Serivia. At that moment, she felt a strong *energy*. She wonders if it was a provocation from her. Or maybe the *energy* she has stored in the interior of her body is overflowing?

Either way, it is clear as day that that isn't normal. Besides, even without her as a member, the Slayers of Puritaria should be a formidable enemy.

Of course, the Federation of Britannia where Claudia and Douglas are, the Rasiya Army with Gert that seems to be an artificial Variant——and naturally the Warslan army of Judal, they aren't going to be dealt with ordinary means.

– This really... really is going to be a tough fight desuwa...

Claire mutters. But even if that reality is ahead, the objective will not be shaken.

Then, Claire said to persuade herself.

– Nevertheless, we are aiming for the championship—it doesn't matter who our rival is, we will never lose.

– Thank you for waiting.

Karen, who reached the exit B, was able to immediately find the figures of Rebecca and Aoi. Rebecca calls out to the approaching Karen.

– Oh! Karen. You finally came.

– I'm really glad that Touka-san is safe.

– Yes, I truly think so too.

Karen agrees with Aoi.

– Be that as it may, that muscle daruma, he was really the worst. Even though the match was over, he continued attacking Touka!

She remembered the match.

Rebecca lifts her eyebrows and shakes her fist in front of her chest.

– But, it was nice that she has been saved thanks to Hayato-san. Hayato-san was really cool.

– Ehehe, I thought so too.

They smile looking at each other's faces. One is proud of her brother, the other the person she admires.

They cannot help but be happy of his great efforts.

Rebecca didn't disagree.

– Well, it's certain that he was cool.

“”Isn't it!?””

The voice of Karen and Aoi matches.

...and at that precise moment.

Rebecca suddenly stopped her feet.

– Karen, Aoi... wait a moment...

The voice was small. But, it was a powerful one. Karen and Aoi stopped their feet.

– ...what is it, Rebecca?

It was Aoi who asked.

– Try to see that.

Rebecca has a stern expression and the index finger of her right hand points towards the shadows of the decorative plants that are set up in front of the building of the stadium.

She was able to see two men wearing a complete black suit, just like a Variable Suit.

Rapidly hiding from view, they kept talking.

– Who on earth are those people doing...?

– ...I don't understand but, aren't they kind of suspicious?

Rebecca murmured in regards to the question presented by Karen.

Even if they look around, no one else is there.

To begin with, this place is on the other side of the building of the stadium. It's a place that by nature has no traffic.

– Ah! They are leaving from that place.

They started running from that place as quickly as possible. As far as they can see, it seems that they weren't aware of Karen, Rebecca and Aoi.

– What were they doing? Should we check the situation...?

– ———Please wait!

Karen gently stopped Rebecca who tried to move her feet to the place where the men used to be.

– ...what's wrong?

– Somehow, I have a bad feeling.

– A bad feeling you say...

– I don't get it but... maybe...

Just in case, Karen detached the Hundred from her neck and grasped tightly in her hand.

– This is bad!

She judged that on the moment. Karen is convinced, looking at the sparks barely scattering around.

(Those people were terrorists, and they set up bombs!)

The situation is dangerous.

– < <Sacred Amulet Deployment> > *HUNDRED ON!*

A <Sacred Amulet> *card* appeared in Karen's hand. The symbol at the center of it showed a change from the Hundred to a shield.

That emitted a brilliance, and a dome type barrier field was developed, wrapping the bodies of Karen, Rebecca and Aoi. Thanks to that, none of them got hit by the fragments that flew around, nor the cloud of dust that whirled up.

– Are they terrorists?

It was Rebecca that muttered. Apparently she also realized that. Karen said while nodding.

– Both of you, wait here. I will do something about those two!

– Huh...?

– ‘Do something’...?

Rebecca was showing a blurred expression and Aoi had her eyes rounded beyond the glasses.

However, Karen’s eyes are with a strong determination as if they will never falter.

(It will be bad if I don’t catch those guys!)

Throwing the *card* into the sky, Karen shouted.

– Card-san please, help me out!

Then, the <symbol> *mark* in the center of the card changes from a shield to a wing-like one, and converts into particles while releasing light.

Those particles immediately made wings on Karen’s back and shoes.

(Thank you, Card-san)

Karen shows gratitude to her Hundred.

(With this, I can chase them!)

Karen kicks the ground with strength and flies high in the sky.

– Hey, Karen!

– Karen-san!

Rebecca and Aoi.

Karen took out the PDA from her pocket and followed the two men without listening to her friends. It’s in order to inform about the terrorism that just happened to her brother and everyone as well as the current situation of herself.

– Hello, Nii-san... can you hear me!?

At the same time the call connected.

Karen began to talk with an impatient voice.

– Why are they commencing with this *timing*?

Judal, who was taking a rest in the room prepared for the organizers, muttered at the same time as he heard about the terrorist incident.

– Is this *timing*, after the tournament has started and after checking the situation of security?

The one who asked that was Judal's bodyguard, Neveah Grauss.

– Yeah, exactly. That place had little security so it was purposely done—it looks like they have aimed at a place without surveillance cameras. Nonetheless, there are other places that we are short-handed, but for the time being, there are only three places where an explosion can occur. In other words, the other party is not a big organization, so they can't do that much of a big cooperation. I wonder if there is terrorism occurring in the space station in the *Sunshine State* or elsewhere.

– For now, there is no such information.

– It seems that the effect of the operation of destroying the terrorist organizations that had been making progress was quite effective. If we catch the people who caused the terror here and we catch the remaining leaders, it will be as good as destructing them.

– Judal-sama!

Judal stares at the woman who wears the uniform of Warslan, and jumped into the room with impatience.

– What is it? So noisy.

– I, I am sorry...

Apologizing, the woman fixed her posture and continued.

– The information that arrived just now at the security headquarters is that Kisaragi Karen is chasing two men of the group that set up the terrorist attack.

– Kisaragi Karen... is that Kisaragi Hayato's little sister...?

Judal murmured while touching his forelock with his fingers.

– It's a meritorious deed If we assume the girl who's also a diva captured the terrorists. Her treatment, the Hundred that Warslan gave to her and the evaluation of Little Garden will be further enhanced. Besides——.

Judal smiles boldly and continued his words.

– In case she is wounded by the terrorists, the public opinion will lean towards the direction we want in one go. We can deal damage to the anti-Slayer groups.

– Judal-sama, that is too imprudent...

– It is exactly as you say.

Showing a smile like making fun of Neveah in regards to her advice, Judal continued.

– Can you grasp the location of Kisaragi Karen? Put the security guards at that place right away. Capture the terrorists alive as much as possible, and make them spew the whereabouts of their partners. Depending on the situation, there's no problem to dispose of them. Although injured people haven't appeared, don't forget to take care of the spectators.

– What will you do with the tournament?

– ...tournament? Of course I'm not going to suspend it or interrupt it. We will never yield to terrorism. That is Warslan—— and Liberia's justice.

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